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To: Chair Greenlick and members of the House Health Care Committee

From: Martin Taylor, Director of Public Policy & Community Relations
CareOregon

Re: Support for HB 3517

CareOregon supports the critical public health principle of health access for all children in Oregon. We believe Community Care Organizations (CCOs) have the ability to work with Oregon Health Authority (OHA) in developing programs that provide health access to all kids.

CareOregon support HB 3517 as the statutory framework that is required for CCOs and the OHA to work together on developing an appropriate approach.

High Risk Children: the children who are not currently insured under the Oregon Health Plan are also at unusually high risk for homelessness, trauma and contagious disease.

Everyone's Children: public health is a field of health care that identifies what factors impact the collective health of a community. In the case of children they have health exposure to other children at school, child care, community centers, parks, and play areas and children specific retail locations. Children who are sick with a contagious condition expose other children to germs. Every parent is familiar with the experience of the first time in a baby's life they start child care or school and suddenly become sick more often.

The trauma and violence that are often associated with these very high risk children also has a public health risk. There is the likelihood that without a behavioral health safety net for traumatized children the cycle of violent behavior will repeat itself.

HB 3517 will not itself solve or address any of these issues. This legislation simply allows the OHA to address the public health issues that have been raised in this written testimony. If the OHA is granted this authority CareOregon would offer to join with other CCOs and the consumer advocates to consider next steps.