



April 14, 2015

The Honorable Mitch Greenlick
Chair, House Committee on Health Care
State Capitol
Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: House Bill 3517, Access for children residing in Oregon

Dear Representative Greenlick and members of the committee:

Providence Health & Services fundamentally believes that access to health care is a basic right, particularly for children. As such, we support efforts to expand coverage to all children residing in Oregon whose families fall below 300 percent federal poverty level - regardless of how a child came to reside.

In addition to our social responsibility, research shows that providing health care coverage to children yields long-term savings for the state that will far exceed the initial investment. This is particularly true for House Bill 3517, as it would not require additional appropriations to the medical assistance budget. The bill simply allows the Oregon Health Authority to provide coverage if it can be financed through available funds.

As an organization driven by our Mission to serve the poor and vulnerable, Providence frequently partners with community organizations to provide primary and preventative care through community benefit programs. Although these programs meet an immense need, the challenge remains that without consistent access and coverage, these children may go without care until high-acuity, high-cost services are needed in an emergency department or hospital. When this level of service is required hospitals respond and provide charity care, but that is no substitution for coverage.

Providence has been a longtime supporter of increasing access to coverage as part of health care reform and believes this is a reasonable extension of those efforts. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment; we hope the committee will join us in support of House Bill 3517.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Pam Mariea-Nason".

Pam Mariea-Nason, RN, MBA
Executive, Community Health Division
Providence Health & Services – Oregon

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mark Thomas".

Mark Thomas, M. Div., BCC
Director of Mission Integration and Spiritual Care
Providence Hood River Memorial Hospital