

Providence Health & Services
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May 7, 2015

The Honorable Richard Devlin and
The Honorable Peter Buckley
Chairs, Joint Committee on Ways and Means
State Capitol
Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: House Bill 2825, Housing development fund

Dear Senator Devlin, Representative Buckley and members of the committee:

As Oregon's largest health care system and provider of mental health services, and one of the state's largest employers, Providence Health & Services strongly supports the creation of a housing development fund in Oregon through House Bill 2825.

Providence is extremely committed to providing the highest quality clinical care, but our Mission also calls us to seek opportunities to remove the causes of oppression and nurture the spiritual and emotional well-being of those we serve. Everyday our caregivers treat people struggling to manage mental illness in addition to dealing with complex social and economic issues. Many state and community programs are working to address several of these issues – income support, health coverage, nutrition support – but the significant, up-front investment required to initiate construction projects is only possible with a sufficient financial commitment from the state.

House Bill 2825 formalizes the successful program, established by the Oregon legislature in 2014, providing up to 20 percent of construction costs as an incentive for the development of new housing for individuals living with mental illness. Leveraging state resources in this way not only meets a significant un-met need in our state, it aligns with many of our other highest priorities - addressing homelessness, improving mental health services and reducing inappropriate, costly hospital visits.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment; we hope the committee will join us in support of our state's most vulnerable individuals and House Bill 2825.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dave Underriner".

Dave Underriner
Chief Executive
Providence Health & Services – Oregon