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February 2, 2016

The Honorable Laurie Monnes Anderson  
Chair, House Health Care Committee  
State Capitol  
Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: Senate Bill 1503, NP and PA reimbursement

Dear Senator Monnes Anderson and members of the committee:

On behalf of Providence Health Plan, thank you for the opportunity to provide our input regarding Senate Bill 1503, as it relates to the reimbursement of providers.

When legislation regarding payment parity for physician assistance and nurse practitioners passed in 2013, Providence raised a couple of questions. These included wanting to understand if all primary care visits are created equally, or if different types of providers are serving different populations of patients. For example, if patients seen by internal medicine doctors have a higher acuity and complexity than those served by a nurse practitioner – which may justify a reimbursement differential. Secondly, we questioned the reasoning behind reinforcing fee-for-service reimbursement structures when as a state we are focused on the adoption of alternative payment mechanisms, particularly within primary care.

At the conclusion of the 2013 session, although legislation passed, Providence was pleased that there would be multiple opportunities for discussion, both through the Task Force on Primary and Mental Health Care Reimbursement and closer to the established sunset date of 2018.

While the work of the task force did not produce the answers any of us hoped for, rather than dismissing the need for more discussion about this issue, we urge you to encourage continued discussion among payers and providers over the interim. Providence strongly believes there is an opportunity to develop consensus that meets the needs of providers while not jeopardizing the quality or financial stability of the broader health care system.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment, we look forward to participating in continued discussions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Gluckman", written in a cursive style.

Robert Gluckman, M.D.  
Chief Medical Officer  
Providence Health Plan