

February 24, 2017

Joint Ways and Means Roadshow Eugene

Co-chairs Devlin and Nathanson, members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on the impact that maternal child health programs have on the community. My name is Jeni Wroblewski, I am here today as a member of AFSCME Local 2831-1, Lane County Public Health Nurses. I have been an ER nurse for 2.5 years, but recently cut back my hospital hours to become a full time public health nurse with Lane County's maternal child health programs Babies First and CaCOON . I did this because I realized my job in the ER was really just putting a band aid on most patient's problems and I wanted to be able to help them where it actually mattered; in the community. As a public health nurse I am grateful to be able to assist families in Lane County with accessing resources, establishing and maintaining healthy lifestyles and habits, appropriate use of urgent and emergent care, understanding childhood growth and development, and becoming connected to and comfortable in their communities.

As an ER nurse, I am concerned that budget cuts to OHP will only increase the growing problem we have with accessing appropriate medical care. When I started in the ER in Springfield in 2014 we saw, 80 patients per day, we now see an average of 180. This past year, working in the Salem ER, I saw a department staffed for 250 patients per day, but who saw as many as 395 with 6+ hour wait times. Cutting funding to low cost dental care will only increase those numbers and wait times by forcing people into the ER for antibiotics, but where their real issue – need for dental care – cannot be addressed.

As a public health nurse, I know that county programs like Babies First, Maternity Case Management, Nurse Family Partnership, Oregon Mothers Care, CaCOON, and WIC decrease infant mortality, increase vaccination rates, increase well-child visits, decrease ER visits, and work to break the cycle of substance, sexual, and physical abuse for children in our community. For every dollar we spend on these programs, we get back up to \$5.50 in social benefit. For every home visit and phone call I make with Babies First and CaCOON families I know I'm

reducing ER wait times, improving the health of the families I work with, and in return, the health and wellbeing of the community I live in. We have to support our communities by supporting families and we can't do that without funding to maternal and child health programs, access to health insurance, and low-cost dental care.