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Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Services

HB 5026 - Health Systems Division

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Co-Chairs, members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on HB 5026, the Oregon Health Authority's Health Systems Division budget.

The mission of the Oregon Law Center (OLC) is to “achieve justice for the low-income communities of Oregon by providing a full range of the highest quality civil legal services.” OLC has been engaged in working with the legislature over the years on the Oregon Health Plan, Medicaid expansion, and Healthcare Transformation in keeping with our mission.

The great majority of OLC's clients are covered by the Oregon Health Plan. We support the continuing service levels for OHP, including the Medicaid expansion. We are opposed to moving the treatment pair lines or cutting benefits. We do recognize that revenue solutions will be needed to balance the health systems budget, and support provider assessments to achieve sufficient funds, matched with federal funds, to cover the current population. While raising revenue is not the domain of Ways and Means, we call upon members of this subcommittee to advocate for full funding.

OLC also supports “Cover All Kids,” which is funded in the Governor's Recommended Budget with \$55 million of General Fund. Again, additional revenue will need to be raised.

These two areas of focus are important in considering the bill before you today. While Oregon has made progress in covering Oregonians, significantly reducing the rate of those uninsured, there are still areas in need of improvement. A key area of concern is children. HB 2726 and SB 558, if passed by the policy committees, would come to this subcommittee for further consideration. These bills would extend the Oregon Health Plan to all children below 300% of the federal poverty level.

Oregon has been a leader on so many health issues, and we now have the opportunity to continue the success of OHP and expanded Medicaid, as well as doing something that should make us all proud as Oregonians – ensuring that all children have access to quality, affordable care.

Thank you for your consideration. I greatly appreciate your leadership and commitment.

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