



January 28, 2019

TO: The Honorable Senator Monnes Anderson, Chair
Senate Health Care Committee

FROM: Sherri L. Alderman, MD, MPH. IMH-E, FAAP
Oregon Pediatric Society

SUBJECT: SB 526, Universal Voluntary Home Visiting

Chair Monnes Anderson, please accept this testimony for the record from the Oregon Pediatric Society (OPS). OPS is the state chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. Our members are committed to improving the health and well-being of all Oregon children. We carry out our health equity mission through policy advocacy, quality improvement programs that support practice change, and the ongoing education of providers who serve children. **OPS strongly supports Senate Bill 526 and the policy of universal voluntary home visiting.**

I am a Developmental Behavioral Pediatrician with infant mental health endorsement at the highest level and 21 years of experience serving babies and their families. As such, I see the critical importance of a baby being cared for by a nurturing, emotionally available parent and its impact on early brain development, academic success, lifelong health, and growing ability to make a meaningful contribution to society.

Having a baby is a major life-changing event for which no one can truly be fully prepared. Universal voluntary home visiting provides an option for new families to receive a friendly one to three visits by a professional skilled at engaging with new parents in a kind and supportive way. Receiving this service is the family's decision. This primary prevention strategy is in the spirit of listening and responding to a family's self-identified interests for services that support them to be the best parent they aspire to be. Universal voluntary home visiting does **not** displace other longer term home visiting programs but rather broadens the reach to match the full diversity of families with newborns in the state.



Universal voluntary home visiting happens in the convenience of the new family's home at a time when the family is adjusting to the transformational experience of having a baby and often fatigued. Offering this opportunity to all parents of newborns is a standard of care that operationalizes the societal value and priority we place on babies and their families in a nonjudgmental, supportive way.

SB 526 calling for a study of home visiting by licensed health care providers is a logical first step toward creating a full spectrum of home visiting options to support the full diversity of new families in Oregon.

I am happy to provide further details and answer any questions.