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

FROM: Cate Wilcox, Manager
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SUBJECT: Senate Bill 526-Universal Home Visiting

Chair Monnes Anderson and members of the committee; I am Cate Wilcox, manager of the Maternal and Child Health Section at the Public Health Division of the Oregon Health Authority. I am here to provide information on a proposal to implement Universal Home Visiting in Oregon in the context of SB 526 which directs the Oregon Health Authority to study home visiting by licensed health care providers.

Universal home visiting is a voluntary program that would offer every Oregon family with a newborn one to three visits in their home, during which the nurse would assess support needs and refer the family to services. The birth of a child is a big change for any family and most families welcome support at this time of transition.

Voluntary, evidence-based Home Visiting is an effective strategy to help parents and children thrive and will improve, among other things, breastfeeding rates, postpartum depression screening, and school readiness decrease health care costs and foster health equity. The Harvard University Center for the Developing Child states "...early experiences are built into our bodies, creating biological "memories" that shape development, for better or for worse." (InBrief: Foundations of Lifelong Health). Universal Home Visiting is a critical tool to help ensure that Oregon's newborn residents and their parents get off to a healthy start.

Current home visiting programs in Oregon only provide services to families found to be at-risk for poor outcomes and don't have sufficient funding to reach every family who could benefit. These programs offer intensive services over the course of many months and often years and are effective at reducing child maltreatment, improving the overall health of family members, and improving school readiness.

A Universal Home Visiting program will offer a home visit to every family with a newborn, including foster and adoptive families. This program is less-intensive than existing home visiting programs in Oregon, typically ending services by the time the infant is 3 months old.

A Universal Home Visiting program will not replace the existing programs in Oregon that provide more visits over a longer period and are targeted to higher-risk families. A Universal program will identify what all families of newborns need and want from local resources and provide individualized, non-stigmatizing referrals to a variety of supports, including these more intensive home visiting programs. Creating a universal home visiting model across Oregon ensures that every family in Oregon has the best start possible.

The \$4 million General Fund investment presented in the Governor's Recommended Budget is a down payment to anchor universal home visiting in Oregon by:

- Establishing the state level infrastructure to develop, implement and maintain universal home visiting, starting with establishing the program for Oregon Health Plan members;
- Supporting implementation in an initial cohort of 5 to 6 communities;
- Serve approximately 10,000 families by leveraging \$4.7 million in federal Medicaid funding during the the 2019-2021 biennium.

We can bring a Universal Home Visiting Program to Oregon in two phases. First, OHA would begin with communities that have existing systems for home visiting for at-risk families. OHA will work with these service and provider organizations to people can benefit from voluntary home visiting as these communities continue to work together to tailor cultural and regional resources to match families' needs with available community supports. This includes using the existing early childhood

systems, such as Early Learning Hubs, local non-profits, faith-based organizations--whatever is right for the community.

This work takes about a year to complete and includes training providers and establishing referral systems. Services will start in five to six communities one year after establishing the funding. Engaging coordinated care organizations, health systems, community-based organizations, local public health authorities and commercial health plans as well as cultural communities and the families served ensures delivery of a person-centered program that reach every family in Oregon.

The second phase, under the leadership of Senator Steiner Hayward, will incorporate families with commercial insurance in the Universal Home Visiting program. We anticipate conversations with insurers to take about a year to establish the criteria for home visiting to reach every family in Oregon. This phased approach will establish a Universal Home Visiting program that can seamlessly expand to all families including those with commercial insurance by 2026.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide information on the Universal Home Visiting proposal. I am happy to provide more detail or answer any questions.