

March 26, 2019

Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Transportation and Economic Development
Attention: Co-Chair Manning, Co-Chair Gomberg, and Members of the Committee
RE: Support for SB 5512 / Supportive Housing, EHA/SHAP

Kaiser Permanente Northwest is an integrated health care delivery system that provides care to over 620,000 members in Oregon and Southwest Washington. As a non-profit health plan, our mission is to provide high-quality, affordable health care services and to improve the health of our members and the communities we serve.

We know that without a safe, stable place to live, our communities cannot be healthy. The need for housing consistently ranks among the top social needs for our patients. Because stable housing is such a key determinant of health, housing has become a major area of investment for Kaiser Permanente. Our regional commitments through the end of 2020 add up to nearly \$8 million of investment in housing development and services, with a focus on our most vulnerable communities.

Recent examples include our partnership in Lane County with PeaceHealth and ShelterCare to provide transitional housing for people with severe mental illness or who are medically fragile; and partnering with other health care organizations to invest over \$21 million toward Central City Concern's housing in Portland.

We know that the solution to Oregon's affordable housing crisis lies in partnerships among government, nonprofits, and the business community. No one sector alone can solve this crisis; but working together, we can ensure that vulnerable Oregonians have a safe, healthy place to call home.

We urge you to support the Governor's request for \$50 million for permanent supportive housing, along with a \$4 million investment from the Oregon Health Authority.

This proven model requires not just an initial capital investment but ongoing resources to fund the rent assistance and wrap-around services to ensure vulnerable residents will be stable and healthy in their housing. Kaiser Permanente is proud to be a partner helping to fund supportive housing for vulnerable Oregonians. We urge the Legislature to fund a strong State investment in this proven housing solution.

We urge you also to support \$50 million for emergency rent assistance and emergency shelter.

Kaiser Permanente's patient navigators and social workers strive to connect our housing-insecure and homeless patients with resources to help stabilize their lives. Oregon has two proven programs, the Emergency Housing Account and State Homeless Assistance Program, which serve our entire state with desperately needed resources. We urge the Legislature to fund these critical programs, to help provide stability for families, seniors, people with disabilities, and individuals with low incomes.

Thank you so much for your consideration, and for your service to our State.

Sincerely,

Dan Field
Executive Director, Community Benefit & External Affairs