



March 27, 2019

Oregon State Legislature
House Committee on Health Care
900 Court St. NE
Salem Oregon 97301

Re: House Bill 3076 – Community Benefit

Chair Salinas and members of the House Committee on Health Care:

Salem Health is a local not-for-profit hospital that does not earn a profit for stockholders or owners. Instead, it invests all available resources into providing our community with the health care facilities, providers, services and programs it needs. A volunteer board of trustees guides our organization to ensure that we fulfil this duty, which has been our role in the community for over a hundred years. Because of our commitment to the health and well-being of the community, I urge you not to adopt House Bill 3076.

As a mission-driven health care organization, we invest in initiatives that focus on identified health needs. We make community benefit decisions the same way we look at other expenditures — with the needs of our local community top of mind. These decisions are guided by a community needs assessment that we conduct in partnership with other organizations and area governments.

Wherever we spend resources, our aim is to have the greatest impact on the health care needs specific to our community. In the past, this has meant forging greater partnerships to bring pediatric specialists to our campus so parents don't have to travel to Portland for their children's care. We've opened a pain clinic that focuses on multiple dimensions of pain management to help reduce patient's reliance on prescriptions to manage pain.

In 2018, we spent \$129 million in what is categorized as community benefit spending. That includes \$11 million in charity care, \$11 million in subsidized health care services and \$2 million spent on physician recruitment. We have also had a particular focus on local programs that address social determinants of health — the environments that affect not only basic health, but quality of life, outcomes and other risks. Recent community benefit spending includes:

- Boys and Girls Club of Marion and Polk Counties - \$25,000 to support the Triple Play initiative, an program that encourages healthy and active lifestyles among youth.
- Marion Polk Food Share - \$25,000 to increase access to fruits, vegetables and nutrition education through innovative partnerships with community-supported agriculture and community health clinics.
- Isaac's Room - \$41,000 to strengthen the holistic approach of IKE Quest and enable divested youth to build a foundation for greater success by establishing healthy patterns of behavior, reversing/reducing the effects of obesity, substance abuse and addiction, while enhancing physical, mental and spiritual health and wholeness.

- Community Services Consortium - \$50,000 to fund the CSC Youth and Community Garden, a new, community-based project in Independence designed to address obesity by providing experiential education opportunities to community members through gardening, nutrition education and promotion of active lifestyles.
- Liberty House - \$50,000 to establish a new and critically needed medical evaluation service for Polk County children referred to Liberty House with concerns of physical or sexual abuse or neglect.
- Options Family Counseling - \$44,418 to increase access to substance use disorder treatment in Marion and Polk counties, in collaboration with Bridgeway Recovery Services.
- Salem Housing Authority - \$50,000 to support the Homeless Rental Assistance Program by funding peer support services for chronically homeless clients who have been housed or are awaiting housing placement.

These investments, and others like them, are vital to changing health outcomes in our community for the better. They drive positive, long-term health outcomes and catalyze community collaboration around identified health needs. These programs are helping to transform the landscape of our community for the better, providing funding for vital, innovative programs that would otherwise remain undeveloped.

Mandating specific thresholds of charity care spending as proposed in HB 3076 ignores the complex health care needs of the community. Spending that creates healthier communities at large needs to be flexible to the specific needs of a geography. To create long-term improvements in community health, we must have the ability to invest in other important areas, such as social determinants of health. I urge your opposition to HB 3076.

Sincerely,



Cheryl Wolfe, RN
President and CEO
Salem Health