



*Oregon's Voice for Long Term Care & Senior Housing*

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To: Chair Gelser, Vice-Chair Heard, Members of the Committee

From: Phil Bentley, Oregon Health Care Association

Re: Support for SB 1035

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of **Senate Bill 1035**. The bill would require the Department of Human Services (DHS) and the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) to convene a stakeholder group to advise on the creation of a waiver application for the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). The waiver would allow Oregon to match our General Fund dollars with Medicaid dollars in support of respite services and other supports for family caregivers.

For decades, Oregon has been a leader in long term care services and supports, including ranking 4<sup>th</sup> in AARP's 2018 Long Term Care Scorecard. Supporting family caregivers aligns perfectly with Oregon's State Plan on Aging's values of *independence, choice, and dignity*. And respite is a critical component of supporting these critical family caregivers.

Family caregivers play a key role in our system, providing millions of hours of care each year to hundreds of thousands of Oregonians. As providers of care for thousands, our members are keenly aware how challenging and time intensive providing care for a loved one can be. Respite can provide a crucial break for family caregivers, allowing them to tend to their own needs, go grocery shopping, or even go see a movie.

We look forward to being involved in discussions going forward on how the state can best leverage federal resources to support all forms of caregiving.

*The Oregon Health Care Association is the largest long term care trade association in Oregon and represents more than 900 organizations statewide including licensed in-home care agencies, nursing facilities, assisted living and residential care communities, senior housing organizations, and business partners.*