



CareOregon Testimony in Support of HB 2270

Chair Nathanson and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of HB 2270; this legislation is critical to the future funding and programming necessary to provide quality health care to Oregonians eligible for the Oregon Health Plan (OHP).

CareOregon, a nonprofit that this year celebrates its 25th anniversary serving the OHP population, is a founding member of Health Share of Oregon, the Coordinated Care Organization that contracts to manage Medicaid benefits in the Portland Metro area. CareOregon manages physical health benefits for 200,000 of Health Share's 300,000 members, and dental health benefits for 70,000. Additionally, CareOregon manages OHP benefits for 30,000 members in Jackson County through ownership of Jackson Care Connect, and 25,000 members in Clatsop, Columbia and Tillamook counties through ownership of Columbia Pacific CCO.

CareOregon supports HB 2270 because approximately 9% of all OHP spending is directly connected to smoking related illness. HB 2270 contains provisions that will establish a \$2 tax on cigarettes, and the state's first ever tax on e-cigarettes. While we support this bill because of the \$346 million that will be generated for the OHP each biennium, we also support this bill because we have first hand experience working to mitigate the negative impact of smoking on our membership.

Half of all children born in Oregon are born on the OHP, and we know that cigarettes and e-cigarettes have a negative impact on kids. Studies show that the number of middle schoolers who have tried an e-cigarette has increased by 48% since 2017. We are encouraged by studies which show that proposals like HB 2270 will prevent over 19,000 kids from taking up smoking, while helping an additional 31,000 Oregonians quit smoking all together.

CCOs are obligated to improve the health experience of the individual, to improve the overall health of entire populations, and to do so in the most cost-effective manner. CareOregon supports HB 2270 because this legislation will help achieve these goals. Thank you again for this opportunity to testify, and please do not hesitate to call upon us if we can be of any assistance in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "H. Rigsby".

Jeremiah Rigsby, JD

Chief of Staff
CareOregon