



Samaritan
Health Services

InterCommunity
Health Network CCO

3.2.2021

Joint Committee on Ways and Means
Subcommittee on Human Services

Re: HB5024 – Oregon Health Authority Budget

Co-Chairs Senator Lieber and Representative Nosse,
Members of the Human Services Subcommittee,

My name is Bill Bouska, and I am the director of Government Relations for Samaritan Health Services, which includes our five hospitals, Samaritan Medical Group, IHN-CCO and Samaritan Health Plans.

I am writing to urge each of you as well as your committee and the full legislature to prioritize the stabilization and full funding of the Medicaid budget, as well as the pursuit of all available federal matching funds to help preserve access to healthcare for all Oregonians.

Without question, these are extra-ordinary times for our state. The Pandemic continues to challenge the finances and resources of systems and providers as well as the community members we serve. We believe it is appropriate to focus on the tasks that will provide the most immediate, meaningful impact - **maintaining the OHA's focus on the delivery of our statewide COVID response, and maximizing federal matching funds to fill the gaps**, allowing our state funds to go as far as possible. Additionally, the Federal Government appears poised to provide emergency financial relief to states, no doubt overdue but no less needed. We believe **this likely infusion of one-time Federal relief money related to COVID should be dedicated to addressing the budget problems that COVID created or worsened.**

Oregon's CCO program is the model for state delivery of Medicaid services. **Anything less than fully funding and supporting this budget adds an unnecessary and poorly timed element of risk for thousands of vulnerable Oregonians.** Providers, clinicians, and the community-based organizations that support your 1.2 million constituents on the Oregon Health Plan need to know they have your support.

I look forward to further discussions on this critical issue, and to participating/engaging in collaborative efforts that will improve care and access for all of us.