

Esteemed Committee Members

It is my great honor to submit testimony in support of HB 3039. Creating a statewide health information exchange and electronic social service referral system will transform the way clinicians, like myself, can provide care for Oregonians like Ellen, a 35 year old woman in my practice. Ellen (not her real name) is a mother of three, one of whom has special needs. She, her husband, and their family live in a small home in Oregon City, subsisting only on her husband's income. Ellen and her husband both have complex, chronic medical conditions. They also struggle with food insecurity, learning disabilities, and financial instability. Until recently, Ellen utilized the emergency department for many needs that could be met by her primary care. The implementation of EDIE, the emergency department information exchange, dramatically reduced the frequency with which Ellen went to the ED by facilitating clear communication between our office and her ED providers. Imagine what could be achieved if we had similar facility of communication with Ellen's local WIC and SNAP offices, or if we could sign Ellen and her family up for TANF at an office visit. Not only could we reduce the cost of her care, but research clearly shows that we could improve her health outcomes but truly addressing the upstream factors that contribute to her wellbeing. Now imagine we could use this same system to directly evaluate the correlation between social determinants of health and chronic disease outcomes. Mapping health metrics to utilization of social services would produce a truly revolutionary system that addressed whole-person health; potentially saving billions in taxpayer dollars through informed, targeted spending on resources with the highest impact on the health of Oregonians. Thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts, and for your visionary leadership.

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