



February 3, 2022

Senate Committee on Health Care
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Letter of Support for SB1538

Dear Chair Patterson, Vice Chair Kennemer, and Members of the Senate Committee on Health Care:

Thank you for the opportunity to offer Health Share's support for SB1538. Health Share is a Coordinated Care Organization (CCO) serving approximately 400,000 Oregon Health Plan (OHP) members in Clackamas, Multnomah, and Washington Counties. We proudly endorse the COFA Dental program because it will provide dental care to low-income citizens of the Pacific Islands residing in Oregon under the Compact of Free Association.

SB1538 will help ensure that COFA members can access dental care without barriers. COFA members are an important part of our community, and as Oregon's largest CCO, we are proud to advocate for their dental coverage. Health equity can only be achieved when underserved populations have access to all forms of health care, including dental care. Health Share envisions a healthy community for all, and this bill would help us advance that vision by expanding dental care to the COFA community.

Health Share recognizes the strong connection between oral health and overall health and well-being. In addition to oral health issues like cavities and gum disease, disparities in access to dental care have been linked to a higher risk of chronic conditions including heart disease, diabetes, and certain cancers. SB1538 would eliminate major barriers to care for members of the COFA community and help ensure that every member of the community has access to dental care, improving both short and long-term health outcomes, and advancing health equity. For these reasons, Health Share strongly supports this bill.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to Yoni Kahn-Jochnowitz, Director of Public Policy, at kahn-jochnowitz@healthshareoregon.org.

Sincerely,

Yoni Kahn-Jochnowitz
Director of Public Policy
Health Share of Oregon