

February 9, 2022

CareOregon Comments on HB 4035

Chair Prusak & Members of the House Health Care Committee,

For over 25 years CareOregon has served Oregon Health Plan members and currently manages benefits for over 500,000 Oregonians through ownership of Columbia Pacific Coordinated Care Organization (CCO) and Jackson Care Connect, our partnership within Health Share of Oregon, and tribal care coordination. Guided by our mission to inspire and partner to create quality and equity in individual and community health, we appreciate you bringing this important legislation forward as we believe CCOs are critical partners in the urgent work of redetermining all 1.4 million OHP members at the end of the federal public health emergency.

CareOregon agrees with Sections 1 and 2 of HB 4035. Given the task at hand and the time constraints we must operate in, we look forward to participating in a well thought out redetermination process that maintains OHP enrollment to the greatest extent possible. We specifically appreciate including special consideration and flexibility related to member continuity of care which includes waiving of statutory barriers so that CCOs can conduct outreach and enrollment assistance, and update member contact information with OHA. CCOs have an important role to play and often already have some of the most vulnerable members in front of us through engagement in care coordination and other services. CCOs are also able to fund navigators, assist in verification processes, utilize call center resources, and provide up-to-date contact information. That said, we hope for stronger language and clarity in the final bill on how CCOs will connect with members during this unique redetermination process.

While we are eager partners in addressing the redeterminations of OHP members at the end of the PHE, we also look forward to thoughtful and collaborative engagement in developing a longer-term solution for the coverage needs of many of those same Oregonians that are in the 138-200% FPL range. In particular, CareOregon supports the premise of the Basic Health Program (BHP), as we believe it presents Oregon with the opportunity to build upon existing statewide efforts to be a smart purchaser of health care and to advance health equity goals and curtail the cycle of disruptions in coverage and care for those between 138-200% FPL.

Oregon has experienced great success in health care transformation through the CCO model. The intent of the CCO experiment was to move an entrenched, siloed health care delivery system into a managed care model that delivers on the “Triple Aim”; simultaneously improving individuals’ experience of care and population health, in a cost-effective manner. While there is room for improvement within the CCO model, the initiative has made clear the positive outcomes of a “smart purchasing strategy”; Oregon is only purchasing Medicaid health care services from entities that achieve improvement targets on population health metrics while working within a budget with a

fixed 3.4% rate of growth. A BHP with the design elements highlighted in Section 3 of the bill would continue to build upon this smart purchasing strategy to benefit an underserved population.

CareOregon also supports the work of the Taskforce described in Section 3, and the prioritization of health equity in its plan and recommendations. Churn compounds existing health inequities by disrupting coverage and care for a segment of the OHP population that is overrepresented by BIPOC individuals. Addressing both the continuity of coverage and care of this population is an important step that will move Oregon closer towards its goal of eliminating health inequities by 2030.

To be clear, it is not our intent to have our support of the BHP concept overshadow the primary issue this bill is addressing: developing a redetermination plan that maintains OHP enrollment to the greatest extent possible. We look forward to our role as a trusted partner in the redetermination process and ultimately supporting a bridge plan that achieves stakeholder agreement on a path forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stefan Shearer', written in a cursive style.

Stefan Shearer, MPA:HA
Public Policy & Regulatory Affairs Specialist
CareOregon