



January 27, 2023

Re: Oregon Memory Net Program, SB 796

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

Please support SB 796 to establish the Oregon Memory Net.

More than 69,000 Oregonians are living with Alzheimer's disease and this number is increasing dramatically as our population is aging. To compound the problem, Oregon and the U.S. are facing a shortage of neurologists who help to diagnose and treat this condition.

The Oregon Memory Net can help to provide an early and accurate diagnosis for those with dementia. This is important for providing access to treatments and to critical support services for patients and their families. Such care has broad consequences for health care utilization, avoiding excess use of emergency room visits and delayed entry into long term care settings.

There are multiple precedents for a program like this in states including Georgia, Wisconsin, Florida, California, New York, Florida, Texas, Montana, and Virginia. Oregon needs a similar program. Current wait times for services in Portland, where most of such resources exist, are longer than 200 days.

Oregon Health & Science University has one of the nation's few National Institute on Aging (NIA) designated Alzheimer's Disease Research Centers. The Oregon Memory Net would establish a state partnership with this center to establish a Memory Assessment Clinic outside of the Portland metro area. Such a model is taken from the very successful Georgia Memory Net program, which has become a national paradigm.

Please provide the Oregon Memory Net your strongest consideration.

Sincerely,

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