

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

Thank you for considering SB 796, which would establish the Oregon Memory Net.

More than 69,000 Oregonians are currently living with Alzheimer's disease and this number is growing. Multiple this several fold, and you have the number of Oregonians directly impacted by this disease, whether the diagnosis is given to spouse, a parent, or a neighbor. This is quickly becoming a public health crisis. An early and accurate diagnosis is a critical component to this challenge and has numerous benefits, which Oregon Memory Net will address:

- Better management of co-occurring chronic conditions
- Access to support services for both the individual and caregivers
- Access to available treatments and participation in clinical trials
- Ample time for advance care and financial planning
- Opportunities to build a care team
- Better safety, as families can ensure their environments are prepared for progression of the dementia
- Gives the person with dementia time to focus on what is important

This plan will directly benefit the state budget. Nationally, if those in the "mild cognitive impairment" stage were all diagnosed, the country would save an estimated \$7 trillion in health and long-term care expenditures (2018, Alzheimer's Disease Facts and Figures). Appropriately diagnosing and managing dementia and supporting family caregivers' well-being has been shown to reduce emergency room utilization and delay entry into long term care settings, both of which are huge costs to the state.

Oregon has always been a leader in healthcare in this country, but on this issue we are behind the times. We currently have a 200+ day wait time for dementia diagnostic services in Portland (where access is greatest. Many other states have taken action to support early detection and diagnosis of Alzheimer's and other dementias, including Georgia, Wisconsin, Florida, California, New York, Florida, Texas, Montana, and Virginia. It is time for Oregon to get on board.

The Oregon Memory Net would establish a state partnership with the only NIA-designated Alzheimer's Disease Research Center in Oregon (OHSU) to establish a Memory Assessment Clinic outside the Portland-Metro area. This model is taken from the very successful Georgia Memory Net program, which has become a national model. It is efficient, easily scalable, and proven.

Please support SB 796 to establish the Oregon Memory Net.

Sincerely,



Emily Morgan, MD
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