



Honorable Chair Patterson
Honorable Vice-Chair Hayden
Senate Committee on Health Care
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court St NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Support for Senate Bill 796

Dear 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.

Greater Oregon Behavioral Health, Inc. serves twelve rural and frontier Eastern Oregon counties as part of the Eastern Oregon Coordinated Care Organization with over 70,000 Members. Our members face additional challenges to access advanced neurocognitive care and expertise due to the challenges with access and the geography.

The Oregon Memory Net will support the early detection and diagnosis of Dementia. Nationally and in our state, Alzheimer's disease is a major public health crisis and the numbers is only expected to grow.

Unfortunately, despite this knowledge, vast majority of those with Alzheimer's disease and other Dementias are not identified sooner or at the early stages. This leads to increased disease burden including development of depression and other health challenges, difficulty in accessing care, eligibility for services, financial and advance care planning.

Early detection and planning has the highest return on investment and will help relieve challenges to the state health care system. Accessing placement options for those with Alzheimer's disease and Dementia is a major challenge due to the cost and limited availability. They face hurdles with emergency room utilization and face delay entry into long term care settings in addition to caregiver burden for their loved ones.

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). The Oregon Memory Net would establish a state partnership with the only NIA-designated Alzheimer's disease Research Cen-

ter 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. This will be a great resource for Eastern Oregon counties where access to memory assessment clinic will be a major support.

Please support SB 796 to establish the Oregon Memory Net.

Please contact either one of us if we can be of assistance (kwheeler@gobhi.org, schandragiri@gobhi.org).

Respectfully Yours,

Karen Wheeler

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Chief Executive Officer

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