

Submitter: Lori Weiss

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care

Measure: SB796

Chair Patterson, Vice-Chair Hayden, and members of the Committee:

My name is Lori Weiss, here today to share my story and ask for your support for Senate Bill 796.

I am a wife and a mother of two children 28 and 30 years old. I started my professional life as an engineering and marketing manager. Later on I decided to pursue education, and I became a high school teacher. But things started to change for me. For example, I was teaching a lesson in my personal finance and accounting class on leasing cars and couldn't remember how to explain the example I had just put on the board.

In early 2019, I received a diagnosis of Mild Cognitive Impairment. While this diagnosis was certainly not what I wanted to hear, I feel lucky that I was able to receive an early and accurate diagnosis. Many in Oregon are not that lucky, and I know there are long waits to receive a diagnosis even for those with warning signs and symptoms.

Getting an early diagnosis has made a big difference in my life. We have the opportunity to focus on quality family time - my husband and I are spending every day like it's Valentine's day! We wouldn't have that without an early diagnosis.

Catching it early also meant I was empowered to volunteer, advocate like I am today, and learn – I do all of this by participating in the Early Stage Advisory Group at the Alzheimer's Association. I can also focus on the health-related items that can help slow the disease: diet, exercise, brain games, building relationships, and dementia-related activities like my painting group - Memories in the Making. My family had time to educate themselves and learn what this means for all of us. Cognitive issues impact the entire family, so I'm glad they are able to be prepared.

As more treatment options come out, an early diagnosis will be even more important. Since I'm still in the Mild Cognitive Impairment stage, more options have been opened to remain in the early stages and stay independent for longer and I'm currently participating in a clinical trial that is working for me. If someone is delayed or unable to receive a diagnosis, those options will not be open to them.

Senate Bill 796 would establish the Oregon Memory Net and would be a step forward to allow better access to diagnosis services for Oregonians. I'm happy to answer any

questions.