



February 25th, 2025

OCCYSHN
Oregon Center for Children and
Youth with Special Health Needs

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Dear Chair Reynolds, Vice-Chair Anderson, and Members of the Senate Committee on Early Childhood and Behavioral Health,

On behalf of the Oregon Center for Children and Youth with Special Health Needs (OCCYSHN), we are writing in strong support of Senate Bill 695 (SB 695), which aims to improve maternal and infant health services across Oregon. This bill is a critical step toward addressing health disparities and ensuring comprehensive, equitable care for all families, particularly those in underserved communities.

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As Oregon's Title V funded public health agency for children and youth with special health care needs (CYSHCN), OCCYSHN works to strengthen systems and policies that support these children. CYSHCN are those with or at risk for physical, emotional, developmental, or behavioral conditions requiring specialized care. While some of SB 695 focuses specifically on maternal and perinatal health, its impact extends to CYSHCN and their families by improving early health outcomes and reducing long-term health challenges.

We are particularly encouraged by several key provisions of SB 695:

- **Strengthening the Perinatal Workforce** – Expanding workforce development for traditional health workers will enhance culturally competent, community-based care for CYSHCN and their families. Investing in these professionals improves maternal and infant health outcomes, especially in diverse communities.
- **Integrating Early Learning and Health Care** – Requiring Coordinated Care Organizations (CCOs) to collaborate with early learning hubs in community health improvement plans will strengthen connections between early childhood development and health care. This partnership supports early identification and intervention for CYSHCN, ensuring families have access to comprehensive medical and developmental resources from birth.
- **Improving health and well-being for all Oregon children** – Directing the Health Plan Quality Metrics Committee to establish milestones for pregnancy and early childhood will help track and address existing disparities in maternal and infant health. This proactive approach will ensure CYSHCN receive the support they need during critical pre-natal and early childhood periods, which will lead to improved health outcomes.



SB 695 has the potential to transform maternal and infant health in Oregon, ultimately creating healthier environments for all children, including those with special health care needs. We urge the Committee to support this bill and help ensure that all families receive the care and support they need for a strong start in life.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to seeing SB 695 move forward.

Sincerely,

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