



March 24, 2025

Dear Co-Chairs and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to emphasize the critical importance of continued investment in healthcare benefits for essential workers in Oregon's long-term care sector. As an employer in this industry, *Avamere Laurelhurst Village* understands that access to high-quality, affordable healthcare is a key factor in attracting and retaining a stable workforce. The Essential Worker Healthcare Trust (EWHT) has played a vital role in ensuring caregivers have comprehensive, cost-effective healthcare benefits, which support the recruitment and retention of the dedicated professionals who care for some of Oregon's most vulnerable residents. Continued funding for programs like EWHT is essential to maintaining a strong and sustainable long-term care workforce.

COVID has changed the face of health care as we know it. There was a detrimental impact to the Long-Term Care sector as we lost valuable direct care staff due to burnout, fear, and change in career path. Our industry has had to rely heavily on agency staff to keep our doors open to care for the vulnerable populations we serve.

This led to poor quality results and lack of continuity of care. As a result, we were forced to find ways to recruit and retain our own workforce and discontinue use of the agency. EWHT was and has been a huge contributor to this campaign. It has allowed Laurelhurst Village to offer a competitive wage and benefit package that has led to attracting quality direct care workers. As of May 2024, we have been agency free and the quality of care we provide for our patients has shifted dramatically.

Ongoing investment in the Essential Worker Healthcare Trust is an investment in Oregon's long-term care workforce, ensuring that we can continue to provide quality care to those who need it most.

Sincerely,

Tracie Poirier
Administrator
Laurelhurst Village