

Thank you co-chair Thompson and co-chair Greenlick, members of the committee. My name is Bryce Kennedy. I've lived in Oregon for nearly 30 years, except for college and a stint in Vancouver WA. I've worked for many Oregon companies, including two family businesses. Today I'm proud to be a health coach with Take Shape for life, a complete and comprehensive health program.

The state and Legislature have taken positive steps to help state employees improve their health. I'm here today to urge the Legislature to more fully recognize the health impacts of obesity, and being overweight. I'll briefly explain how personally improving my health has dramatically improved my life, and how if the state gave treating obesity and overweight a similar priority, that state workers and those receiving public assistance would be better off, and how health care costs would be reduced.

Prior to getting healthy I was nearly 50 lbs overweight, in pain, and had very low energy. I'd gone from active to sedentary, and was experiencing increased health care costs, and lower productivity, even missing days of work. My personal life was also negatively impacted as I slept a lot, and often said no to doing the things I'd once enjoyed.

At the urging of a doctor I sought a solution that didn't involve more pills, and more expense. I worked with my coach and changed my nutrition, and learned how to live a healthy life. Within two weeks of starting weight loss my pain subsided. In 13 total weeks I dropped 48 lbs of body fat, built muscle, eliminated all my pain medications, and I no longer say no to any physical activity that I once enjoyed. I have not lost a single day of work in four years do to any of the symptoms I experienced prior to this program. What's more, I am more active today at age 37, running faster and further with quicker recovery, than I was in my early 20's. Take Shape for Life gave me my life back.

Take Shape for Life is officially a medically supervised program of nutritional intervention for disease management and weight loss. Our coaches receive extensive training from Doctors, Nurses, Dietitians, and behavior specialists. All of our claims have been vetted by the FCC, and our company works closely with the FDA. Johns Hopkins University endorses our program, and even utilizes it in a clinic. Some insurance companies refer patients to us. Our parent company, Medifast, has been a leader in safe weight loss for 30 years, and combined with our coaching division, has been recommended by over 20,000 doctors.

I urge you to take additional action and change the focus of the Oregon Health Authority, and all state agencies involved in health care and delivery of services to state employees and those covered by the OHP. Please move from merely disease treatment, to health creation. Wellness programs that include personal coaching have saved a lot of money for many organizations. If you adopt an incentive model for state employees, and expand wellness options for primary care providers, I'm sure many other Oregonians will see their lives improve too. And like me, their health care requirements will decrease, and the subsequent savings to the state could be enormous.

Thank you again.

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