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Attn: Sandy Thiele-Cirka, Administrator for House Health Care Committee
Oregon State Capital

Dear Sandy

I am writing in support of HB2294: Oregon Health Information Technology Program and HIT Oversight Council.

I am a practicing primary care pediatrician in Oregon at my current clinic since 2001. I have had a long interest in how technology can support health care. I also serve on the state Health Information Oversight Committee. In my experience, a primary care provider spends most of their time collecting information and a minority on true decision making and delivering health care. Having effective, reliable tools at the point of care can improve efficiency, patient safety and health outcomes.

Oregon is a leader in EHR adoption in clinics and hospitals but we continue to struggle with how to connect. The long promise of meaningful, reliable health information exchange continues to just out of reach. The technology and policy standards seem to have finally come together in 2014 to allow this to propel forward. While many vendors are moving quickly and their products are supporting the latest standards, big gaps remain. Barriers continue in cost to implement, technology availability, usability, and applicability to different roles in the health system. There is a need for state services to supplement functionality and help fill in gaps, overcoming barriers to wider adoption. The scope of the federal EHR incentive program left many important sectors unable to benefit, slowing adoption of health IT. There is a huge need for technical assistance in helping health care providers choose which technology to adopt and how to best implement.

The Health Information Oversight Committee includes expertise from many areas of the health system. By shifting into the Oregon Health Authority more deliberately will increase its effectiveness in coordination with the varied health IT initiatives occurring in different departments of OHA and implementing Health IT Strategic Plan.

Sincerely yours,

Kenneth Carlson, MD, FAAP