

**Testimony before the Senate Health Care Committee**

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Good afternoon, Chair Monnes Anderson and members of the committee. My name is Janet Bauer. I am a policy analyst with the Oregon Center for Public Policy. Thank you for your leadership on the important matter of health insurance for all of Oregon's children and for hosting today's discussion.

There is clear evidence that health insurance during childhood has positive economic impacts on children, families and for the broader economy. Those benefits come in the form of higher educational attainment and higher earnings as working adults. These benefits appear to last into the future.

A Rand study in 2005 found that better health status in childhood was associated with higher incomes, higher wealth, more weeks worked and a higher growth rate in income. Further, the study found that a sibling who reported excellent or very good health in childhood earned 24 percent more than a sibling in poor health.

Studies have also found that public health insurance coverage is linked to a lower likelihood of bankruptcy and to less medical debt. Clearly, health insurance coverage for children contributes to the economic stability of the families in which they live.

There is also evidence that health insurance coverage for children benefits the broader economy. Researchers have found that providing health insurance to low-income children and pregnant women increased their spending on other consumer goods by the equivalent of \$800 per family per year in 2009 dollars.

Clearly, Oregon would win by ensuring that all Oregon children have health insurance coverage. Certainly the children and their families would win. Our economy would win as well.

Thank you for this opportunity to share some of the research on this topic.