



March 13, 2019

To: Senate Health Care Committee

From: Jared Mason-Gere, Oregon Education Association

RE: Opposition to SB 780

Chair Monnes Anderson and Members of the Senate Health Care Committee:

The Oregon Education Association, representing 45,000 public educators across Oregon opposes SB 780 and any efforts that could diminish the size and purchasing power of the Oregon Educator Benefit Board (OEBB) purchasing pool; reduce even further the benefits or total compensation of hard-working, undercompensated educators in our state; or make it more difficult for them to access health care providers.

The Oregon Education Association has worked hard to hold down health care costs in the public sector and to ensure that the OEBB purchasing pool can negotiate from a position of strength in order to secure the best health care for the lowest possible cost. We fear that by diluting the strength of the pool, those leaving the pool will suffer as will the broader OEBB membership as the board represents a smaller number of covered lives. Pulling one large negotiating pool apart and establishing multiple smaller pools would drastically dilute OEBB's ability to push for contracts that secure good quality coverage at prices below the private market rates.

Many rural Oregonians already struggle to access health care providers. OEBB members, in most cases, have access to more than twice as many providers as those in CCOs, and this legislation would also have dire consequences for dental access.

We look forward to continuing to find ways for OEBB to bring down and hold down health care costs for educators and other public servants. We believe SB 780 would impede these efforts and hope the committee will work with us to find better options. Please oppose SB 780.