



March 27, 2019

Oregon State Legislature
House Committee on Health Care
900 Court St. NE
Salem Oregon 97301

Re: House Bill 3076 – Community Benefit

Chair Andrea Salinas and Members of the House Health Care Committee:

At St. Charles Health System, Inc., our commitment to our community in the form of community benefit is critical to our mission of “In a spirit of love and compassion, better health, better care, better value”. We can only accomplish this by supporting our patients and community by reaching outside our walls to help improve the health of our community. Our vision “Creating America’s Healthiest Community, Together” compels us to contribute to the wellness and well-being of our patients and their families. For that reason, we oppose the inflexible and prescriptive changes to community benefit as envisioned in HB 3076 and urge you to oppose it as well.

We contribute over \$125 million a year via community benefit, charity care and supporting government programs. Our direct community benefit and charity care amount to over \$3 million annually. However, the real impact is more than dollar figures, it’s in the improvements in health that we drive with that funding. Our community benefit activities are centered on programs and funding that respond to the unique needs of the populations that we serve. We conduct community health needs assessments every three years in which we spend a great deal of time identifying health disparities in our community alongside partner organizations and governmental actors. We then develop action plans and funding strategies to address the identified needs.

Highlights of our Community Health Needs Assessment work, that is focused on Suicide Prevention and done in partnership with many organizations in Central Oregon, includes:

- Columbia Suicide Risk Assessment implemented in 100% of St. Charles Clinics.
- Conducted 85 QPR (Question, Persuade and Refer) trainings with 1,569 participants.
- Awarded \$137,203 for suicide prevention work.
- Active participation in the Oregon Suicide Academy in response to St. Charles’ commitment to becoming a “Zero Suicide” organization.



- Provided \$25,000 to expand the Lines for Life Youth Line program to Central Oregon.

Our community has seen improvements in health care coverage since the full implementation of the Affordable Care Act. Initially need for charity care has fallen but is on the rise again. That is something we applaud, as it means people are accessing the coverage they need at the time that it is needed. With charity care rising again, we believe that imposing high thresholds for charity care would lead to unintended consequences.

In short, community benefit is a transparent program that is working well in our community. We object to prescriptive policy that could engender changes that do not serve our unique community needs. We urge you to oppose HB 3076 and instead allow hospitals to engage in a collaborative policy process that centers on driving health outcomes.

Thank you for your service and please reach out with any questions about our programs.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

Jennifer R Welander

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Jennifer R. Welander
Chief Financial Officer
St. Charles Health System, Inc.