

RE: 2908-A OPI Expansion Study, letter for Senate Committee on Human Services

Tuesday, May 7, 2019

Chair Senator Sara Gelser  
Vice Chair Senator Dallas Heard  
Senate Committee on Human Services  
Oregon State Capitol  
900 Court Street  
Salem OR 97301

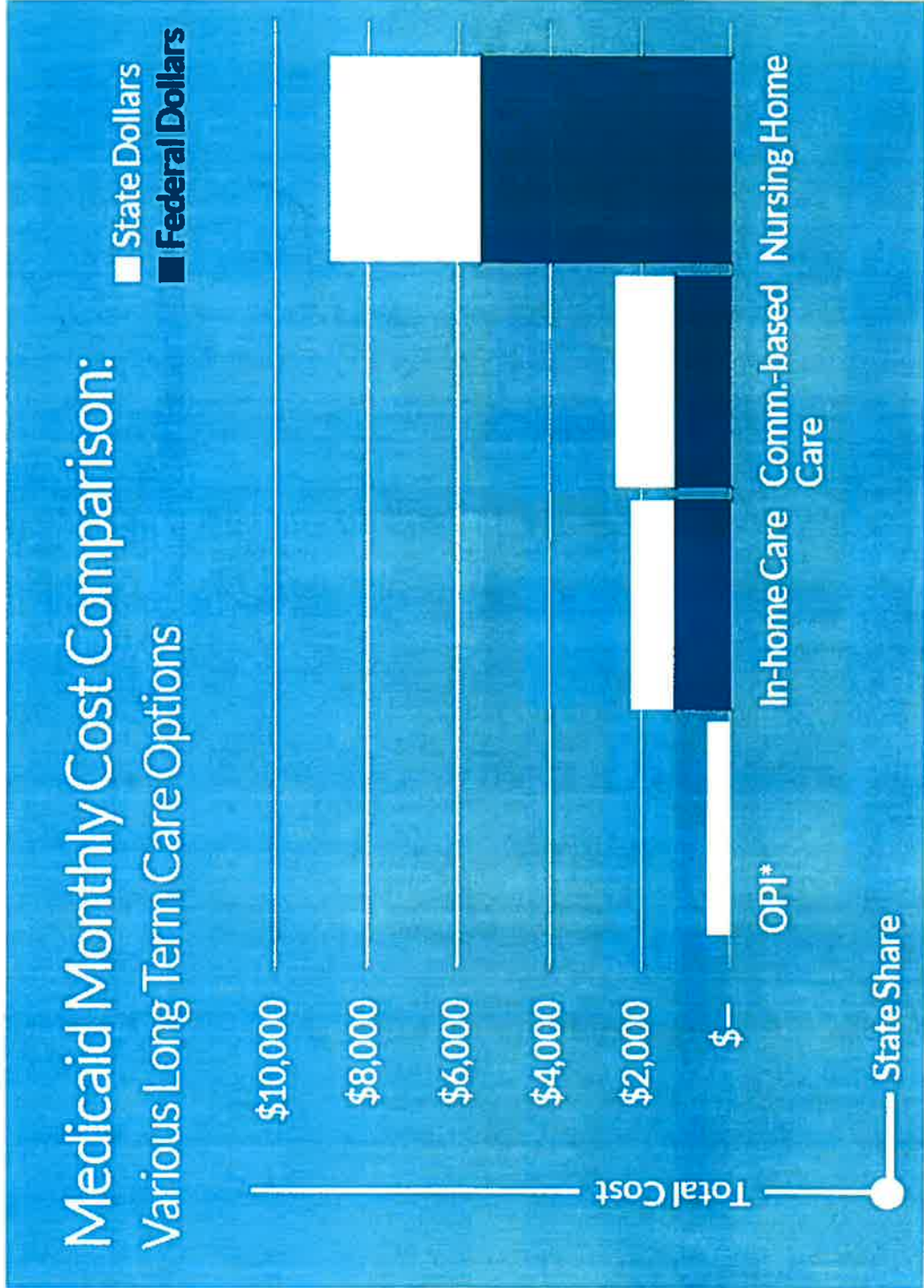
RE: HB 2908-A Oregon Project Independence Expansion Study

Madam Chair Sara Gelser, Vice Chair Dallas Heard, and members of the Committee, The Senior Advisory Council and Disability Services Advisory Council volunteers of NorthWest Senior and Disability Services (NWSDS) thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on HB 2908-A and the importance Oregon Project Independence (OPI) has on the thousands of Oregon seniors and people with disabilities.

OPI remains a high priority for the populations we represent. We are supportive of efforts to expand this program, especially as it looks to provide services to people with disabilities on a par with services provided to seniors throughout the entire state. OPI is cost effective, allows people to remain in their own home and community. HB 2908-A would allow the state and the agency's that administer this program to truly understand the cost and benefits it can provide if offered in all parts of the state. Most importantly, it would help the state better prepare for the increasing population of Oregonians who are eligible for this program.

Consumers on OPI do not receive Oregon Health Plan or Medicaid Long Term Care benefits. If an OPI consumer were to move into Medicaid, the cost to the State would immediately increase at a significant rate, as shown in Attachment A. Well over half of all OPI consumers are at income levels that would qualify them for Medicaid services. An example of this is Mathew who is a resident of Tillamook, Oregon (see Attachment B). His story, like many others on this program, exemplifies the importance this program has in ensuring people's independence. Without OPI, Matthew would be unable to function in his home, and likely need greater level care, at a much higher cost. He states he is happy with his current living arrangements and does not wish to go anywhere else.

Attachment A



**Attachment B**

**Mathew**

**OPI —SPL 10**

77 years old

Tillamook, Oregon

**“He really enjoys living in his home”**



Mathew came to Tillamook as a teen, leaving Portugal due to an unstable government that wanted him to go to war in Africa. Matthew is the middle child of 10, five sisters and four brothers. He currently lives alone in his trailer on a dairy farm that he worked at for several years.

He suffers from back pain due to an accident at work and heart problems. Due to his condition he relies on the assistance of his Homecare Worker through OPI.

Without this help, Matthew would be unable to function in his home, and likely need a higher level of institutionalized care, at a much higher cost. He states he really enjoys living in his home and would never want to go to any type of community based care facility. Matthew is happy with his current living arrangements and does not wish to go anywhere else.

<b>Living situation:</b>	Lives alone
<b>Monthly Income:</b>	\$1,116.00
<b>Type of Assistance:</b>	9 hours every two weeks of OPI
<b>Monthly Service Cost:</b>	Approx. \$ 224.00*