

March 2, 2021

JOINT WAYS & MEANS HUMAN SERVICES SUBCOMMITTEE

RE: Testimony On HB 5024 – Oregon Health Plan Budget

Co-Chairs Lieber and Nosse, and Members of the Committee,

For the record my name is Dr. Manu Chaudhry. I am the President and Dental Director for Capitol Dental Care (CDC). We are a dental care organization that provides care to Oregon Health Plan (OHP) beneficiaries, through contracts with coordinated care organizations across the state.

I am here to voice Capitol Dental Care's concern about Oregon Health Plan funding, specifically as it relates to the underlying dental rates for the development of the 2021-23 budget, and to request your support in addressing the inadequate funding of Medicaid dental services.

Dental Care Organizations (DCOs), including Capitol Dental, have significant concerns about the 11% cut in dental rates that were implemented on January 1, 2021, and which are reflected in the budget proposal for 2021-23. This reduction set dental rates back to 2014 levels. It will compromise dental access, upset dental advancements made under CCO 2.0, and further limit provider participation.

DCOs have shown a high level of success in improving access to care and meeting the vision and dental requirements outlined in CCO 2.0. Many of those gains will be lost and new innovations will be difficult to accomplish. It will take multiple years in the future to stabilize and recover to our current success level if the rate reduction is not addressed.

We are asking that you act now to fund Oregon's Medicaid dental system at an appropriate rate level to ensure our patients do not lose access to dental care. Without your support for increased dental funding based on appropriate rates, we risk worse health outcomes for OHP members; higher health care system costs as OHP members turn to emergency rooms for treatment; and decreased access to care for rural, low income and other vulnerable populations. In addition, despite the many successes of DCOs in improving access to care, developing innovative ways to provide care and meeting the dental requirements outlined in CCO 2.0, we cannot sustain these achievements with these drastic rate cuts and resulting lower funding for dental services.

Thank you for allowing me to testify today.