

April 14, 2023

Joint Committee on Ways and Means
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Letter of Support for Senate Bill 576

Dear Members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means:

Thank you for the opportunity to offer Health Share's support for Senate Bill 576. Health Share is a Coordinated Care Organization (CCO) serving over 440,000 Oregon Health Plan (OHP) members in Clackamas, Multnomah, and Washington Counties, including over 50,000 members with a disability. We proudly endorse the expansion of Medicaid so that gainfully employed people with disabilities may continue to maintain employer-sponsored insurance coverage and access vital health care and long-term services and supports (LTSS) through OHP.

Under current law, employed Oregonians face a difficult choice. Many require Medicaid for essential healthcare and access to LTSS, but cannot advance their career, accept pay raises and promotions, or meaningfully grow their personal assets without losing their vital OHP coverage. People with disabilities should not be confronted with the choice of advancing their careers or keeping critical health coverage through OHP. We believe that requiring people to make that choice is both an injustice and an impediment to advancing health equity.

SB 576 will help eliminate a major barrier to care for Oregonians – and it comes at a pivotal time. According to the CDC, one in four Oregonians have a disability¹, and rates are expected to increase due to an aging population, rising rates of chronic conditions, and the effects of long COVID². People with disabilities disproportionately experience health disparities and barriers to care. SB 576 would eliminate a problematic systemic barrier to care and ensure that working people with disabilities can get the care and supports they need while pursuing a fulfilling career. For these reasons, we are honored to endorse SB 576.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to reach out to me, Mindy Stadtlander, at stadtlanderm@healthshareoregon.org.

Sincerely,

Mindy Stadtlander
Interim Chief Executive Officer
Health Share of Oregon

1 "Disability & Health U.S. State Profile Data for Oregon." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Last updated May 18, 2022. <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/impacts/oregon.html>.

2 Mitra, Monika, Linda Long-Bellil, Ian Moura, Angel Miles, and H. Stephen Kaye. 2022. "Advancing Health Equity and Reducing Health Disparities for People with Disabilities in the United States." *Health Affairs* 41 (10): 1379–86. <https://doi.org/10.1377/hlthaff.2022.00499>.