

May 4, 2023

Oregon State Legislature
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

Re: House Bill 5025

Submitted Electronically

Co-Chair Frederick & Co-Chair McLain:

The Oregon Association of Hospitals and Health Systems (OAHHS) is a mission-driven, nonprofit association representing Oregon's 62 hospitals. Together, hospitals are the sixth largest private employer statewide, employing more than 70,000 employees. Hospitals are more than just buildings; they are cornerstones within the communities they serve. Our hospitals are employers, funders of community projects, and community spaces—all while providing essential health services to generation after generation of Oregonians. We know that when our hospitals are strong, our communities win. OAHHS is committed to fostering a stronger, safer Oregon with equitable access to excellent health care.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide support for the Oregon Poison Center funding request in HB 5025 as part of the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) budget. The Oregon Poison Center is a 24-hour health care information and treatment resource for poison emergencies serving Oregon, Alaska and Guam.¹ Most calls originate from the public, seeking initial advice prior to any other contact with health care providers.

As the toxicology experts for the region, the nursing and physician staff of the poison center provide ongoing consultation and case management assistance to health care providers managing patients who have experienced a toxic exposure. An Oregon Poison Center medical toxicologist is on call 24 hours per day to respond to complex toxicologic cases. The Oregon Poison Center provides ongoing consultation and follows patient progress with the treating health care provider to assist in evaluating diagnostic tests, clinical laboratory and EKG findings.

Just under half (47%) of the patients receiving assistance from the Oregon Poison Center are children less than six-years-of-age. Adults over 19 years of age represent about 39% of exposure cases.²

The Oregon Poison Center was established by an act of the Oregon State Legislature in 1978 to provide emergency treatment information for patients experiencing a poisoning or toxic exposure. The Oregon Poison Center is also responsible for providing public outreach and education to health care professionals.

“The Oregon Poison Center receives approximately 60% of its annual funding from the State's Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), 27% from the state General Fund, and 13% from

¹ [OHSU, Oregon Poison Center, About Us.](#)

² [OHSU, Oregon Poison Center, About Us.](#)

federal grants, and contracts from other agencies and states. In the last 4 years, the Enhanced Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (eFMAP) used to determine SCHIP funding, has declined from 97.79% in FY19 to 72.22% in FY 23. This decline in SCHIP funding used to support the Poison Center has been offset by one-time funding from other federal sources such as the CARES Act. However, for the 2023-25 biennium, the Poison Center is projecting a \$900,00 shortfall in funding required to maintain its current level of service.”³

OAHHS asks that the legislature support the funding ask of the Oregon Poison Center, in HB 5025 as part of the HECC budget to ensure that this program is viable and can continue to prevent poisonings and to minimize adverse effects of exposures to drugs, poisons, chemicals and natural toxins.

Thank you for the opportunity to engage on behalf of our members and the communities they serve.

Thank you,



Andi Easton
Vice President of Government Affairs
Oregon Association of Hospitals and Health Systems

³ [Higher Education Coordinating Commission, LFO 2023-2025 Budget Review, March 22, 2023, page 17.](#)