

Submitter: Tara Olson
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means
Measure: SB5506

Dear Co-Chair Steiner, Co-Chair Sanchez, and members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means,

My name is Tara Olson and I am writing to ask that the Joint Ways and Means Committee appropriate funding to provide the non-federal matching funding needed for Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) programs to receive Medicaid reimbursement across the state.

NFP is an evidence-based community health program with 45 years of evidence showing significant improvement in the health and lives of first-time parents and their children facing economic and social barriers. NFP has operated in Oregon since 1999. NFP works by having specially trained nurses regularly visit young, first-time parents-to-be, starting early in the pregnancy and continuing through the child's second birthday. With the support of an NFP nurse, families see better pregnancy outcomes, improved child health and development, and greater economic self-sufficiency. Parents, babies, families, and communities all benefit from the proven services of NFP.

I work from the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program and we frequently refer families to NFP. The state match would decrease the need for county general fund supplementation which could allow for expansion of NFP services or at least protect funding for the existing Maternal Child Health programs. It would also allow some of our neighboring counties to add NFP.

NFP programs in Oregon rely on Medicaid to pay for their services to families, but Medicaid requires non-federal match funding that is currently being paid by the county health departments. This funding arrangement creates a threat to the sustainability of NFP in counties implementing the program. Also, counties that cannot pay the match funding are unable to implement an NFP program. This creates inequitable access to the beneficial outcomes of this program.

I support NFP's request for \$8 million from the General Fund to provide the non-federal Medicaid match for NFP programs. This funding would be appropriated to the Health Systems Division of the Oregon Health Authority. This will allow NFP programs in Oregon more certainty to provide services and would help NFP continue expanding to counties that do not have programs.

Thank you for your service to our state and for your consideration of this request.

Tara Olson
Washington County WIC Program Supervisor