

Submitter: Matthew Richardson
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Early Childhood and Behavioral Health
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB691

Dear Chair Reynolds, Vice-Chair Anderson, and members of the Senate Committee on Early Childhood and Behavioral Health,

My name is Matthew Richardson, and I am a government affairs manager for the Nurse-Family Partnership home visiting model. As an organization that is deeply involved with supporting maternal health, I am writing to share our support for SB 691.

Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) is an evidence-based nurse home visiting program that partners specially-trained registered nurses with expecting parents, starting early in the pregnancy and continuing through the child's second birthday. With the support of an NFP nurse, families experience better pregnancy outcomes, improved child health and development, and greater economic self-sufficiency. Parents, babies, families, and communities all benefit from these proven services.

As a program that works with families who are facing economic and social barriers in life, NFP nurse home visitors frequently engage with parents struggling with substance use disorders or behavioral health challenges. Where this is a dearth of services for such issues, we far too often see children removed from the home and lasting trauma for children. Children born to people with substance use disorders are at high risk for child welfare involvement. In Oregon, 51.4% of kids placed in foster care were placed with parental substance use disorder as a major contributing factor.

Integrated prenatal medical care, substance use disorder treatment, and housing-based supports through programs like Project Nurture or Nurture Oregon have shown to decrease foster placements in the first year of life, decrease risk of child maltreatment, and increase the number of prenatal visits. These programs produce cost savings due to fewer foster placements. NFP programs in Oregon have even formed partnership with Project Nurture to better coordination between our teams.

Outcomes improve with adequate prenatal medical care, peer support, doula support, and early entry into substance use disorder treatment services. As a program heavily invested in helping families thrive, Nurse-Family Partnership supports SB 691.