



Support Senate Bill 695
Senate Committee on Early Childhood and Behavioral Health
February 25th, 2025

Dear Chair Reynolds, Vice-Chair Anderson, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Arielle Hacker and I am the Strategic Initiatives Coordinator at Prevent Child Abuse Oregon (PCA Oregon) - a statewide nonprofit dedicated to child and family wellbeing through community-based, comprehensive, primary prevention strategies. I respectfully submit this testimony in support of SB 695, which would build on the success of Coordinated Care Organizations (CCOs) to provide needed maternal and infant health services across Oregon. It is critical that we include strong maternal health and early childhood metrics for CCOs in order to direct more resources to prevention and early intervention.

Pregnancy and the first 12 months of life are critical for social emotional and cognitive development and can affect social, educational, and health **outcomes across the lifespan**. Childhood trauma and adversity (ie. adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)), including abuse, neglect, and witnessing violence in the home or community, can lead to toxic stress—prolonged or excessive activation of the stress response system.¹ Decades of research into ACEs tells us:

- Half of ACEs occur by age 3.²
- High-stress levels and trauma can change a child's brain chemistry, brain architecture, and even gene expression.³
- ACEs lead to an increased risk of developing chronic diseases and behavioral challenges, including obesity, autoimmune disease, diabetes, heart disease, poor mental health, alcoholism, and even reduced life expectancy by as much as 20 years.⁴
- ACEs have been linked to poor school performance, unemployment, and the development of high-risk health behaviors, such as smoking and drug use.
- There is a correlation between ACEs and an increased risk for prescription opioid misuse.⁵
- **Prevention works.**⁶

¹https://preventchildabuse.org/latest-activity/long-term-effects-of-child-abuse-and-neglect/?gad_source=1&qclid=Cj0KCQiA8fW9BhC8ARIsACwHqYoiSYnjGyyV3WHDNplcnhZZ-79ldUo_YSQeNJJCneejmc4yfnfRWUaAitaEALw_wcB

² <https://burkefoundation.org/what-drives-us/adverse-childhood-experiences-aces/>

³ <https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/inbrief-the-impact-of-early-adversity-on-childrens-development/>

⁴https://preventchildabuse.org/latest-activity/long-term-effects-of-child-abuse-and-neglect/?gad_source=1&qclid=Cj0KCQiA8fW9BhC8ARIsACwHqYoiSYnjGyyV3WHDNplcnhZZ-79ldUo_YSQeNJJCneejmc4yfnfRWUaAitaEALw_wcB

⁵ <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/31989435/>

⁶ <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapediatrics/fullarticle/2749336>

SB 695 will increase access to quality maternal and infant health care and wrap-around supports in the earliest years in life. By investing in our youngest Oregonians and their families, we are investing in the future and vitality of our state. In addition to promoting child and family wellbeing, supporting Oregon families and their babies will reduce costly intervention in health care and behavioral health expenses down the road.

PCA Oregon partners with over 40 community-based organizations, state agencies, and advocacy coalitions to actualize our vision for an Oregon where all kids and families are living happy and purposeful lives with hope for the future. Achieving this vision hinges on providing our youngest Oregonians and their families with comprehensive, trauma-informed health and behavioral health care early and often. SB 695 would be an efficient and effective way to achieve this outcome.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to Oregon's children and families.

Sincerely,

Arielle Hacker

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