

March 6, 2025

## CareOregon Support for HB 2222 and Mobile Integrated Health

Chair Nosse, Vice-Chairs Nelson and Javati, & Members of the Committee,

CareOregon is a community non-profit organization serving over 500,000 Oregonians covered by the Oregon Health Plan. We have served Oregonians for over 30 years. CareOregon wholly owns two coordinated care organizations (CCOs), Jackson Care Connect and Columbia Pacific CCO. We are a founding member of Health Share of Oregon, managing an integrated community network and the behavioral health benefit for all Health Share of Oregon members in the Portland Metro area.

CareOregon is in strong support of HB 2222, creating billing pathways and support for Mobile Integrated Health (MIH) providers. This support is informed by our unique experience supporting MIH providers in the rural and urban communities we serve.

Since 2017, Columbia Pacific CCO has funded a community paramedicine program in Columbia County. The program, now based out of Scappoose Rural Fire Protection District, has improved access to care in a rural county that lacks a hospital or emergency department. The program focuses on illness prevention and care coordination, improving patients' health and well-being while decreasing burden on emergency services. Patients treated by the program have experienced a decrease in emergency department utilization, including an individual who reduced their annual visits from 33 to 1 over a four-year period. As evidence by the success of the program and the continued demand for service, Columbia Pacific increased funding to this successful partnership to add a second paramedic in 2024.

In 2022, CareOregon launched the Community Health Assess and Treat (CHAT) program in partnership with Portland Fire & Rescue. CHAT is an innovative first response program that provides non-emergency, low acuity medical services directly in the community. CHAT has proven to be agile and invaluable, particularly for low-income Oregonians. Its two-person teams meet community members at their location of need, which often eliminates costly ambulance travel and hospitalization. Based on our experience, we know CHAT serves primarily some of the most vulnerable populations in Portland, including those on Medicaid. Additionally, many of CHAT's patients suffer from substance use disorder, notably opioid use disorder. Since 2024, CHAT has piloted an Overdose Response Team with the support of CareOregon, Multnomah County Health Department, and the Oregon Poison Control Center. The goal is to provide patients who are being treated for an opioid overdose access to buprenorphine medication and follow-up recovery services when first responders respond to a 911 overdose call. Since January 1, 2024, this team has responded to 261 non-fatal opioid overdoses.

Given our eight years of experience supporting MIH programs, we urge your support for HB 2222. We can attest to their efficacy and believe they are the exact type of innovative service delivery to

continue advancing health transformation, the coordinated care model, and meeting the needs of the Oregon Health Plan members we serve.

Thank you,

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