

Submitter: Kestrel Gates
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Early Childhood and Behavioral Health
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1039

Thank you Chair Reynolds and members of the committee,

My name is Kestrel Gates and I am here to testify in support of Senate Bill 1039 to renew funding for the important work of the Oregon Perinatal Collaborative.

I have traveled here from Clatsop County on the coast where I am the director of a community-based program supporting birthing and postpartum families and am developing a regional perinatal task force.

Our county has two birthing hospitals and a free standing birth center and families travel from the neighboring counties to give birth. Our rural community is not considered a maternity care desert.

And yet our families lack many of the services and standards of care that are universally available in more urban areas. These include lactation supports, perinatal behavioral health services, and linguistically congruent care.

Everyone in a rural community is underserved and families with any type of disadvantage are significantly more impacted.

Our programs are stretched thin, our hospitals struggle with staffing.

We don't have what is needed to address the complex causes of perinatal morbidity and mortality in our communities.

The Oregon Perinatal Collaborative provides crucial resources, support, and coordination for rural communities like mine to work to improve access and care for our families. We need the support and advocacy that the Oregon Perinatal Collaborative offers.

For the sake of rural families, please support this bill.

Thank you for your consideration.