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March 10, 2025

Honorable Lisa Reynolds, M.D.
Chair, Senate Committee on Early Childhood and Behavioral Health
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

Re: SB 1039 – Oregon Perinatal Collaborative

Dear Chair Reynolds, and members of the committee,

As the largest health care provider in Oregon, with eight hospitals across the state, Providence Health & Services delivers more babies in Oregon than any other hospital system. Providence is a proud founding member of the Oregon Perinatal Collaborative, and we thank you for the opportunity to voice our support for SB 1039 which works to give our youngest Oregonians a successful start.

The Oregon Perinatal Collaborative has had many successful initiatives, including working with the March of Dimes on the “Healthy Babies are Worth the Wait Campaign,” improving hemorrhage management, and safely reducing the rate for first cesarean sections. The Collaborative is currently improving hypertension (high blood pressure) management and increasing screening for syphilis in pregnancy to reduce congenital syphilis rates. And recently, the Collaborative developed an initiative to improve care and outcomes for pregnant and post-partum substance use disorder care. Sadly, substance use is one of the main drivers of maternal mortality in our state.

With the support of the legislature and funding in the last biennium, the Oregon Perinatal Collaborative was able to move from an all-volunteer organization to one with dedicated staff allowing more consistent and sustained quality improvement efforts, and to expand more reliably beyond the Portland metro area. As an example, this past year the executive director visited all 47 hospitals with an OB unit in the state to elicit feedback on challenges, hopes and desires. It was an incredible undertaking and extremely valuable. That would not have been possible without dedicated staff and funding.

With continued funding, there are a host of new initiatives on the horizon including to reduce rural/urban and racial/ethnic disparities in maternal and infant health outcomes, and an opportunity to partner with the Oregon Health Authority on recommendations coming out of Oregon’s Maternal Mortality & Morbidity Review Committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment. We hope you will join us in support of SB 1039.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kristine Bell", written in a cursive style.

Kristine Bell
Executive Director, Women and Children’s Services
Providence Oregon