

Providence Health & Services
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May 3, 2017

The Honorable Margaret Doherty
Chair, House Committee on Education
State Capitol
Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: Senate Bill 4 - Promoting physical activity in Oregon schools

Dear Representative Doherty and members of the committee:

Today Providence Health & Services continues a vibrant, more than 160 year, history of serving Oregon children and families. Over 9,000 babies were born across our Oregon ministries in 2016. Understanding that early interventions have a life-long impact on each child's overall health, Providence continuously strives to improve clinical outcomes, increase access to children's services and promote community improvement strategies.

Supported by our strong foundation of clinical excellence, Providence is focused on developing innovative solutions to reduce the prevalence of childhood obesity in Oregon. National research suggests that the life expectancy of children may be shorter than their parents due to the rising rates of obesity and subsequent links to chronic disease. Alarming, 2015 data shows that obesity prevalence in Oregon's adolescents is trending upwards and reveals disparities based on race and ethnicity. These statistics are only reinforced by Community Health Needs Assessments conducted by Providence hospitals last year, which found reduction in obesity and diabetes to be a significant health related need in each of the communities we serve.

Providence is working with a diverse, statewide network of organizations and public health experts that share our commitment to increasing activity and improving nutrition in Oregon's children – and we encourage the Oregon legislature to share in these efforts. The adoption of public policies like Senate Bill 4, is critical because it promotes increased activity for children. Senate Bill 4 is a result of a large coalition effort, with a compromised agreement that balances difficult budget realities, and will move Oregon toward healthier communities, together.

We appreciate the work of legislators and Senate President Courtney for their leadership and seeing this process through. Thank you for your consideration and the opportunity to express our support for Senate Bill 4.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Theron Park".

Theron Park
Chief Executive, Delivery Systems
Providence Health & Services - Oregon