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July 7, 2016

Oregon Health Authority
Oregon Metrics and Scoring Committee
500 Summer Street NE , E-20
Salem, OR 07301-1097
Attn: Sarah Bartelmann, Oregon Health Authority Metrics Coordinator

RE: Addressing Health Disparities in Oregon

Dear Members of the Oregon Metrics and Scoring Committee:

AARP Oregon, working through our Diversity Advisory Council (DAC), is aware of your challenge to address the important issue of health disparities within the State of Oregon. The DAC was extremely pleased to learn of the Oregon Health Authority inclusion of this statement, “ a commitment to continue improving outcomes with a heightened focus on equity and reducing disparities by moving upstream” within its request to CMS for Oregon’s Health Plan Waiver Renewal 2017-2022.

Review of data from the renowned Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, Disparities Policy, November 30, 2012, and Executive Summary March 13, 2013 indicated that people of color account for a significant share of the U.S. population today and are projected to make up the majority (over half) of the population by 2050. The Foundation’s statistics noted that in Oregon the number of diabetes deaths per 100,000 of the population (by Race and Ethnicity)

Real Possibilities

showed: 22.8 deaths for Whites; 56.1 deaths for Blacks and 28.7 deaths for Other (2013 data). These statistics indicate significant health disparities. The Foundation study estimated that the American economy loses an estimated \$309 billion per year due to the direct and indirect costs of health disparities.

The Oregon Metric and Scoring Committee has recognized that the human and economic perspectives must be viewed simultaneously in its' attempt to control and reduce the cost of Oregon's health care. AARP Oregon applauds the Committee's commitment and visionary approach to address issues of health disparities for all vulnerable Oregonians with a view across ethnic/racial and generational needs. We urge you to maintain this focus and effort.

Thank you for your work,

Handwritten signature of Jerry Cohen in black ink.

Jerry Cohen
AARP Oregon State Director

Handwritten signature of Elaine Friesen-Strang in black ink.

Elaine Friesen-Strang
AARP Oregon State President