

The Education Fund

Empowering potential.

SEIU-UHW & JOINT EMPLOYER EDUCATION FUND

March 26, 2025

Testimony to Oregon Health Authority, Health Care Market Oversight program and Community Review Board

Re: OHSU-Legacy Transaction -039

The Education Fund submits the following comment in order to illuminate the positive impacts on equity, access, and quality of the proposed transaction's investment in specific workforce development efforts.

The Education Fund supports education and upskilling for adult workers to achieve higher wages, improve job retention, and to fill high-vacancy roles in healthcare.

The Education Fund is a multi-employer, labor management training trust serving 110,000 healthcare workers across 23 employers and 7 SEIU locals. We support our diverse healthcare workforce with education and upskilling opportunities, with the end goals of higher wages, increased retention of healthcare workers within the industry, and meeting demands to fill high-vacancy roles in healthcare.

Our education and training solutions are crafted specifically for working adults. Many people enter the healthcare industry in an entry level position, in a dietary or patient transport position, or with certification like a medical assistant or nursing assistant. For those who wish to advance their careers, into phlebotomy, nursing, or even a doctor, the Ed Fund provides support to meet workers where they are and expand necessary skills and training. This helps employers meet the demands of additional surgical technologists, sterile cleaners, nurses, and more.

By offering a program built for working adults, we offer the support necessary to overcome systemic barriers to education and career advancement.

The Ed Fund offers wage replacement, so workers have time to study and go to clinicals, tuition and book payments, study skill and English language classes, childcare and more. We support learners in a wide variety of stages to advance their career goals.

The Education Fund has a track record of success in growing a diverse workforce in Oregon.

In Oregon, we serve 7,811 SEIU Local 49 members across seven different employers. These members are primarily healthcare workers in service level positions- environmental services, dietary, nursing assistant, central sterile and more. In 2024 we had over 2,200 learners, 29% utilization rate. **48% of Oregon learners are workers of color.**

We have skilled up unit clerks to surgical technologists, medical assistants to LPNs, CNAs to Respiratory therapists, and more. Our learners have 87% completion, 50% improved retention, and 41% (\$11/hr) average wage increase when moving into a new job.

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By collaborating with healthcare employers, labor unions, and state agencies, our fund ensures that frontline workers can access the resources needed for long-term career success while addressing critical workforce shortages.

If approved, the OHSU transaction will expand access to effective workforce training and retention programs, like The Ed Fund.

OHSU, in its signed agreement with labor partners, has committed to contribute ten million dollars per year across three education trusts, including The Education Fund. This investment will significantly increase access to education and training opportunities. Based on our years of work, we know that workers' ability to move up in their career has the positive impacts of improving economic stability for participating employees and their families, increasing the retention of healthcare workers, and filling high-vacancy openings to improve and increase care delivery. Such benefits, especially when combined with the racial and ethnic diversity of the population we serve in Oregon, increase not only access and quality, but of culturally competent care and help overcome historical barriers to education and career advancement.

With this positive impact, we believe OHSU's proposed transaction with Legacy Health should be approved.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rebecca Hanson".

Rebecca Hanson
Executive Director