



Sarah Bartelmann
Program Manager
Health Care Merger Oversight Program
Oregon Health Authority
500 Summer Street, NE, E-20
Salem, OR 97301-1097

October 6, 2023

Dear Ms. Bartelmann:

As CEO of La Clinica, I'm writing to express support for the proposed establishment of HealthRight Group by CareOregon and SCAN Group.

La Clinica is a Jackson County-based Federally Qualified Health Center. We operate eight neighborhood health centers, nineteen school-based clinics, a learning center, and a mobile health center. Since 1989, our mission has been to improve the quality of life for the diverse communities of the Rogue Valley by providing culturally appropriate, accessible, and affordable quality health care to people in our community. CareOregon's CCO, Jackson Care Connect (JCC) serves one in four Jackson County residents and one in every two children under age 5. La Clinica has over 16,000 CareOregon JCC patients empaneled, and we rely on this partnership to support our ability to achieve our organizational mission, vision and goals in service to members of our community that need us most.

In our close-knit community, strong and consistent relationships are key to advancing community health. Our partnership with Jackson Care Connect, along with the expanded expertise, investments and technical expertise offered by CareOregon, fundamentally transforms our ability to advance access to critical services, improve health outcomes for people who are most vulnerable in our area, and to provide exciting programmatic changes that set us on path to eliminating health inequities in our community. I have countless examples of our work with JCC and CareOregon that illustrate exactly how their focus, mission, and deep commitment to the community is evident in their actions and grounded in community building. I see how they consistently make decisions that align their financial investments with what is most needed by those we serve, and how they work carefully to sustain the right tension between vision and practical reality in their style of collaboration. In my experience, CareOregon and JCC staff are fearlessly committed to making decisions that are firmly rooted in the best interest of those we serve, which is quite different and frankly remarkable compared to any other health plan we've worked with over time.

As a testament to our work together and through the provision of tools, technical assistance, and financial incentives, we've forged new programs to manage population health, taken significant strides forward in the provision of complex behavioral health services, expanded the provision of school-based services, partnered creatively with community-based organizations in

serving complex care needs, reduced emergency department visits and frankly, saved lives. We have done this together, not only during our shared COVID response work, but each day as we care for those most vulnerable in our community.

Having said that, you can imagine how important it is to us to preserve this partnership and why the establishment of the HealthRight Group is a serious consideration for our organization and most importantly, for those we serve. We know what is at stake and we have a deep interest in understanding the implications of this new partnership and how it may impact the working relationships we've developed with CareOregon over the last 30 years.

After very careful review and with a deep appreciation for the thoughtful and transparent approach taken by the Board of Directors and leadership of CareOregon and JCC, I am confident that the formation of HealthRight Group will increase CareOregon's ability to meet its ongoing commitment to building healthier communities for all Oregonians. I support the proposed establishment of HealthRight Group and believe it will enhance the existing health safety net and provide necessary stability to assist local providers like La Clinica as we serve our communities. It's essential to support decisions like these that ensure that health care in Jackson County remains non-profit, locally managed, and community-based in a health care environment that is increasingly dominated by national for-profit companies.

I also have confidence that the Oregon Health Authority's CCO contract procurement process will stay the course and ensure the integrity and fidelity of local decision-making with a deep focus on the elimination of health inequities. These are the principles that resonate most with La Clinica, our providers, our patients, and our community. These are the principles that are also envisioned through the establishment of the HealthRight Group.

If I may be of further assistance in this review process, please don't hesitate to let me know.

Sincerely,

Brenda Johnson, RN, MBA
Chief Executive Officer
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