



## Tillamook County Board of Commissioners

201 Laurel Avenue, Tillamook, OR 97141  
Phone: 503-842-3403

Erin D. Skaar, Chair

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October 2, 2023

Re: HealthRight, CareOregon

Dear Ms. Bartleman:

I am writing to express my strong support for CareOregon and SCAN Group's proposal to form HealthRight Group. As states across the nation turn to for-profit companies to help contain health care costs, locally managed, community-based, non-profit health plans are disappearing. We need to ensure that there is a viable option to for-profit health care that provides non-profit plans the platform and scale to compete. HealthRight Group is this alternative. I believe that establishing HealthRight Group is a powerful step to ensure that health care in Northwest Oregon remains locally controlled, community-based and puts people before profits.

The strengths and challenges of the predominantly rural North Coast are closely tied to our geography, industries, housing availability and access to health care. Both CareOregon and Columbia Pacific Coordinated Care Organization (CCO) are focused on the full range of residents' needs, recognizing that individual health is directly impacted by access to food, housing, community, and safety. Because it is locally driven and community based, Columbia Pacific CCO is a valued resource in our communities, with a history of partnering with members, providers, community organizations, and government agencies to identify and respond to areas of need. Our region needs a partner capable of meeting the unique health care needs of our community, not for-profit entities.

Columbia Pacific CCO uses its resources to respond to community needs, from emergency assistance to ongoing reinvestment. At the onset of the COVID-19 public health emergency, Columbia Pacific CCO provided rapid emergency relief funding to community-based organizations in the region, allowing them to continue providing vital services at a time when it was financially difficult for them to do so. In addition to responding to emergent needs, Columbia Pacific CCO continuously reinvests funds into projects in its three covered counties. In Tillamook County alone, Columbia Pacific's 2022 community investments topped \$1 million, with another \$2.15 million in clinical investments in that year.

An example of the type of innovation that is possible in this model are the County Collaborative Risk Shares—established in 2015 as a partnership with our local hospitals, behavioral health, and primary care providers to keep Medicaid sustainable by monitoring cost trends and reinvesting in local services. A total of \$20,579,000 has been shared with partners during this time. This money has been invested in housing, childcare, new services, and to local providers, making health care work better for everyone. Supporting the HealthRight Group proposal helps keep this kind of investment locally driven and community-focused instead of funding corporate profits.

On an ongoing basis, Columbia Pacific CCO engages community partners in the development of new care models or other community innovations, such as a community paramedicine program. The Columbia Pacific CCO Regional Housing Impact Fund has resulted in first-in and/or leveraged funding for over 285 new housing units in Tillamook, Columbia, and Clatsop counties.



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Columbia Pacific CCO investments also help fill gaps in the service array in Northwest Oregon. For example, Columbia Pacific CCO has responded to well-documented limitations in behavioral health access by providing funding for CODA to establish a methadone dispensary in Seaside, so residents no longer had to travel to Portland for methadone treatment. Columbia Pacific CCO has also funded multiple Medications for Opioid Use Disorder (MOUD) services in primary care settings across the region, a new palliative care program, a medical detox and residential treatment program, and co-located behavioral health services in primary care settings to name a few.

I am confident that as part of HealthRight, CareOregon will continue to be a valuable and consistent member of our communities. In our current health care environment, the health of our communities needs an organization like HealthRight Group to help ensure that CareOregon and Columbia Pacific CCO are able to remain innovative, responsive, and withstand competition from for-profit entities contemplating entry into the Oregon market. I strongly support the establishment of HealthRight Group and eagerly anticipate our continued partnership with CareOregon and Columbia Pacific CCO.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Erin D. Skaar".

Erin D. Skaar

Chair, Tillamook County Board of Commissioners

Board Member, Columbia Pacific Coordinated Care Organization