

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

Dear Ms. Bartelmann,

I am the County Commissioner representing District 1 of Multnomah County, the largest county in Oregon. I am also a practicing emergency physician. And I volunteer to provide medical care to people living unsheltered. I am writing in strong support for CareOregon and SCAN Group's proposal to establish HealthRight Group.

This alliance holds great promise for creating a compelling, sustainable model for community-based health care, offering a crucial alternative to large national companies that are dominating the Medicare and Medicaid markets throughout the country. For-profit players threaten the locally controlled, community-based, non-profit payer model that works for Multnomah County residents. Bringing together the shared expertise, best practices, and financial resources of CareOregon and SCAN represents an opportunity to achieve a level of scale and capability that can directly compete in this environment.

As the largest county in Oregon, Multnomah County provides essential services to the nearly 250,000 community members who do not earn enough income to meet their basic needs. These services include mental health care, help for seniors and people with disabilities, support for survivors of domestic violence, housing for homeless families, and much more. The County also oversees emergency response coordination, public safety and corrections and a range of other programs. As a Multnomah County Commissioner, I have a deep appreciation for the role CareOregon has played in our community for almost 30 years. From the policy-making perspective, I believe that the HealthRight Group alliance will bolster CareOregon's ability to improve and maintain Oregonians' health and well-being.

I am also an emergency room doctor and community health advocate, volunteering to provide medical care to individuals living unsheltered. Caring for the most vulnerable on the front line, I am profoundly invested in addressing homelessness, addiction, mental illness, and improving access to meaningful healthcare. My commitment to patients leads me to support CareOregon's effort to establish HealthRight Group with SCAN.

Multnomah County and CareOregon have been partners since CareOregon was established by the County and OHSU. This partnership still thrives today. For instance: CareOregon provides Intensive Care Coordination services for justice-involved members, mainly through comprehensive care coordination interventions to ensure access to physical and behavioral health services and social supports as individuals transition into their communities. This population suffers from high rates of mental illness and substance use disorders. Providing

critical health services and social supports for these individuals can potentially slow the revolving door of recidivism plaguing the justice system and reduce avoidable health care costs.

CareOregon provided the investment allowing Portland Fire & Rescue to launch Community Health Assess & Treat (CHAT), a novel approach for handling 911 calls for lower-risk medical concerns. These 911 calls are directed to the specially trained CHAT medics. They assess the community members face-to-face, provide prompt care and, if needed, guide them to other resources, including the Oregon Health Plan (OHP). The medics also offer a follow-up visit 24 hours later, and education about preventive care. About a third of the medical calls to Portland's 911 system are for low-risk medical needs. Before CHAT was introduced, all 911 calls typically got the same level of response: an ambulance and transport to an ER. Now, two CHAT medics in an SUV respond to a portion of these lower-level calls. The program operates in downtown and outer Southeast Portland, where many such calls originate.

CareOregon Dental has a longstanding partnership with the Multnomah County Health Department. Multnomah County originally operated a dental care organization that transitioned to CareOregon in 2012. Both organizations shared a strong commitment to continue the partnership between the plan and the existing clinic system and are anchor partners in serving the members of our community. Since that transition, there has been ongoing strategic support between both organizations at the highest levels of leadership. This strategic support includes opportunities to increase member engagement and access, improve dental metrics performance, provide financial investments, and develop clinical integration strategies. Since 2015, CareOregon Dental has provided an additional \$16,525,206 in funding beyond claims reimbursement to support the County's oral health priorities.

Most recently, the County's relationship with CareOregon came full circle as CareOregon transferred ownership of the Rockwood Community Health Center building to Multnomah County, representing the culmination of a partnership that began in 2010 with the vision of creating a viable community health center in a chronically underserved neighborhood. Rockwood Community Health Center, a Federally Qualified Health Center provides primary care, internal medicine, mental health and addiction services and community health services sees over 8,000 individuals each year. More than 65% of Rockwood patients identify as people of color, and 35% utilize interpretation services.

CareOregon's long and rich history with Multnomah County is a critical piece of the safety net for our residents. From both my policy and clinical perspectives I know that CareOregon, as part of HealthRight, will continue to have a profound and synergistic impact in our community. I fully support the establishment of HealthRight and look forward to our continued journey with our trusted partner.

Sincerely,
Sharon Meieran
Multnomah County Commissioner
District 1