

February 9, 2012

Representative Thompson, Co-Chair
Representative Greenlick, Co-Chair
House Committee on Health Care

RE: Support of HB 4027
Expands immunity from liability for volunteer health care providers



Dear Representatives Thompson, Greenlick and members of the Committee;

Partnership to End Poverty strongly supports HB 4027 and respectfully asks that you pass this much needed piece of legislation. Our mission is to find innovative solutions to poverty. This bill does just that by providing expanded immunity from liability, which does not exist in current state or federal law, to medical professionals who volunteer their time for outreach services to help others. In other words, volunteering their time at homeless camps and community events where medical, dental and other professional services are provided at no cost.

HB 4027 in its current form does not fully get to the intent of the need to expand immunity from liability for volunteer time spent outside of Doctor's typical clinical settings. Purposely traveling to homeless camps and other events to provide volunteer medical services is where current state and federal laws are flawed. We ask that you amend HB 4027, Section 2. (B) by deleting *does not* to read (B) "Outreach services" include medical or dental services provided by a health practitioner who may register with a health professional regulatory board . . . The way this bill reads in current form, expanded immunity from liability will not include "outreach services", the very heart of why this legislation is needed.

The past five years our organization has put on our signature one-day Project Connect Event, convening over 150 social service agencies and medical and dental providers who serve nearly 3,000 low-income people in Central Oregon. In 2011 we held an additional eight Mobile Project Connect events throughout this region, serving another 1000 people in their home communities. Central Oregon has a strong medical community and we should have more volunteers than we need, yet we struggle to find doctors, dentists, nurses and other medical providers to volunteer their services due to the lack of immunity from liability. Many people who are in need of medical services must be turned away, leaving them no alternative other than the emergency room for their ailments. The cost of not having adequate medical or dental volunteers is millions to our communities in unpaid medical bills at our area hospitals and clinics.

We respectfully ask that you pass HB 4027 with the deletion of "does not" in Section 2. (B) outlined above, and send it to the Floor with a do pass recommendation so that we, along with community partners such as Central Oregon Veterans Organization, St. Charles Medical Center, Mosaic Medical, Volunteer Connect and our counterparts across the state, are able to recruit medical volunteers to help our low-income and those in need. Thank you for your help with this important legislation.

Sincerely,

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