



Testimony in Support of HB 3407 – Traditional Health Workers Commission

April 3, 2013

House Committee on Health Care

Ty Schwoeffermann

Health Equity Organizer

Urban League of Portland

Chair Greenlick and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of the Urban League of Portland in support of HB 3407. The Urban League of Portland supports the goals of this legislation to establish a traditional health workers commission. Without this legislation traditional health workers have the potential of losing key support and policy autonomy that is needed for professionals of all kind in all fields of work.

Traditional health workers assist Oregon in achieving the triple aim of improving patient care, improved population health, and cost savings through: outreach and mobilization, community and cultural liasing, case management, care coordination, system navigation, and health promotion & coaching.

Oregon is experiencing a widespread shortage of its health care workforce and an increasingly diverse population. Community health workers are uniquely positioned in their communities to address issue of health disparities in their role.

Something must be done to address health disparities in Oregon. Between 2003-2006 30.6 percent of medical care expenditures for African Americans, Asians and Hispanics were “excess costs” that were avoidable and the result of disparities in the health status of these groups. Health Inequities cost our country 1.24 Trillion dollars according to a recent survey.

Traditional health workers need to be a part of the rule making process on all levels because their job and careers are being effected without their input. This legislation will have a minimal fiscal impact. The will of the Oregon state Legislature should consider the immediate passage of this bill for the good of all Oregonians.

Join us in supporting HB 3407

Ty Schwoeffermann

Health Equity Organizer

Urban League of Portland