



# Oregon

John A. Kitzhaber, Governor

Testimony in support of HB 3407A  
Monday, June 17, 2013

Jnt W&M SubCommittee on Human Services

Co-Chairs Bates and Nathanson, Sen. Steiner  
Wayward, Sen. Winters, Rep. Freeman and Rep. Gallegos:

The Oregon Commission on Hispanic Affairs (OCHA) is submitting testimony in support of HB 3407A establishing a Commission on Traditional Health Care Workers within OHA.

Addressing disparities in access to effective health care for communities of color is a strategic priority of the OCHA. This includes the overrepresentation of communities of color and women in health issues including diabetes, heart disease, and high blood pressure, and the underrepresentation of these communities in health screening, pre-natal care and other areas. Traditional Health Workers have been shown to be effective in communities where they are trusted members who bridge linguistic and cultural barriers. They assure that outreach, health education, and navigating the health system are tailored to the needs and goals of those they serve, and advocate for them as individual move ahead to access care.

Creating a Commission of Traditional Health Workers is an important step in assuring that these skilled and valued workers are supported in their professional development and have the tools and standing to help craft the policies that guide and evaluate their profession. Oregon is depending on Traditional Health Workers to help meet a number of key goals and outcomes in its health care transformation that cut across age, gender, race and cultural groups. We believe that formalizing a Commission from the foundation built by the Non-Traditional Health Workers Committee is the right idea and that housing it within OHA will give this needed Commission every advantage for support by top professionals in the field.

The Oregon Advocacy Commissions urge the Committee members to positively consider this important next step and support it with your vote.

Sincerely,

Andrea Cano, Chair

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