



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

June 17, 2013

Co-Chairs Nathanson and Bates,

For the record, my name is Joseph Gallegos. I represent House District 30, which includes the Cities of Hillsboro and North Plains, and some unincorporated Washington County.

House Bill 3407 A establishes a Traditional Health Workers Commission within the Oregon Health Authority. In 2011, the Oregon Legislature passed landmark legislation defining Oregon's approach to health care reform. House Bill 3650 mandated that members enrolled in Oregon's coordinated care organization (CCO's) have access to Traditional Health Workers to facilitate culturally and linguistically appropriate care.

Traditional Health Workers are trusted community members who promote health in their own communities. They support individual and families through: Health system navigation, outreach, health education, and client and community advocacy.

Oregon is experiencing a widespread shortage of its health care workforce and an increasingly diverse population. Traditional Health Workers are trusted community members who promote health in their own communities. Building and fostering the role of the workforce of community health workers into health care teams will help assure high-quality, culturally competent care to traditionally underserved populations within an integrated and coordinated health care system.

Traditional health care workers are uniquely placed to work with community members to identify and resolve their own most pressing health issues. They do this by addressing the social determinants of health which then contributes to reducing and eliminating health inequities. House Bill 3407 gives rule making authority to the Traditional Health Workers Commission within the Oregon Health Authority. It also formalizes the existing Non-Traditional Health Worker Committee and converts it to the Traditional Health Workers Commission. By providing rule making authority, we can ensure the participation of Traditional Health Workers to create and inform policy regarding their own profession and the communities in which they work.

This bill provides a critical tool in our continuing effort to reduce health care cost. Traditional Health Worker or "promotoras" as they are known in the Latino Communities have for years provided a critical support to the health care system. However with our client/patient in mind, this bill will provide quality control over this enterprise. As stewards of the health and safety of our citizens, passing this bill is good and responsible leadership. I ask for your support and ask for a work session on HB 3407-A.

Thank you.

Representative Joseph Gallegos, HD 30

