

June 17, 2013

Senator. Alan Bates, Co-Chair; Representative Nancy Nathanson,  
Co-Chair  
House and Senate Members of the Ways & Means Human  
Services Sub Committee  
Oregon Legislative Assembly

**Re: HB 3407**

Co-Chair Bates, Co-Chair Nathanson, and Members of the  
Committee:

My name is Alberto Moreno. I am the Executive Director  
for the Oregon Latino Health Coalition. Thank you for the  
opportunity to testify before you today.

Community health workers and other traditional health  
workers: peer wellness specialists, personal health  
navigators, and doulas, play a vital role in facilitating  
health care access to rural and other underserved  
communities, while addressing healthcare disparities and  
improving health outcomes.

HB 3650, passed during the 2011 legislative session,  
requires that members enrolled in Oregon's Coordinated  
Care Organizations (CCO's) have access to Traditional  
Health Workers to facilitate culturally and linguistically  
appropriate care. The Office of Equity & Inclusion within  
the the Oregon Health Authority has done a tremendous  
amount of work to further develop and bring recognition to  
this workforce. HB3407 builds upon this work, formalizing

the existing Non Traditional Health Worker Committee and converting it into the Traditional Health Workers Commission. This commission, established in statute, will work in collaboration with OHA, to serve as the rule-making body to ensure appropriate training and standards are in place to prepare both workers and health systems for successful healthcare transformation.

While this is primarily a housekeeping bill, it does make one substantive change in that it prescribes increased participation from the workers themselves, aligning with the principle that Traditional Health Workers should help inform and shape policy regarding their own profession. It also ensures the participation of important stakeholders such as employers, trainers, CCOs, providers, and consumers.

Additionally, the state is facing a requirement to have a minimum of 300 Traditional Health Workers trained and certified by 2014 as part of Health Care Reform in Oregon. Formalizing this commission insures that this vital federal requirement is met and that traditionally marginalized communities including rural Oregon receive the care that they need.

Because this is an existing and already resourced committee, no new dollars are needed for this commission and we urge its swift passage.

In closing, Traditional health workers are crucial to the success of healthcare transformation and are a proven strategy for improving patient care, improving community

health, and helping to bend the cost curve— all elements of the Triple Aim.

We hope you join us in supporting this important bill and vital workforce. I would be happy to answer any questions. Thank you.



## Traditional Health Workers\* Include:

### Community Health Workers:

Trusted community members who promote health in their own communities. They support individuals, families, and communities through:

- outreach
- health education,
- client & community advocacy
- capacity building
- health system navigation

### Peer Wellness Specialist:

A person and/or family member of a person with lived experience of mental health challenges and/or addictions who provides support and education to people needing healthcare services, and who has or is at risk for behavioral and/or physical health issues.

### Personal Health Navigators:

Assist individuals to find and connect to the health and social services they need.

**Doulas:** Birth companions who provide personal support to women and families through the pregnancy and childbirth experience.

\*Presently referred to as "Non-Traditional Health Workers"



## HB 3407 – Traditional Health Worker Commission

### Traditional Health Workers are Essential for Oregon's Health Care Transformation.

Traditional Health Workers assist Oregon in achieving the triple aim of improved patient care, improved population health, and cost savings through:

- Outreach & Mobilization
- Community & Cultural Liaising
- Case Management, Care Coordination, & System Navigation
- Health Promotion & Coaching

House Bill 3650, passed during the 2011 legislative session, mandates that members enrolled in Oregon's coordinated care organizations (CCOs) have access to Traditional Health Workers to facilitate culturally and linguistically appropriate care.

### HB 3407 will:

- Formalize the existing Non Traditional Health Worker Committee and converts it to the Traditional Health Workers Commission;
- Ensure the participation of Traditional Health Workers to create and inform policy regarding their own profession;
- Prescribe participation for important stakeholders: providers, CCOs, employers, consumers, and higher education/workforce development; and
- Be budget-neutral as the Commission will fall within existing resources of the Oregon Health Authority.

**Join us in supporting HB 3407!**

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# OREGON

Latino Health Coalition

## Endorsing Organizations of HB 3407



Mama Like Me



Virginia Garcia Memorial HEALTH CENTER



Northeast Oregon Network

