



# WASHINGTON COUNTY

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## OREGON

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**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE**  
**Testimony in Support of HB 2626 – February 11, 2015**  
**William Thomas, Washington County Department of Health and Human Services**

Chair Greenlick, Vice-Chairs Hayden and Nosse and Members of the Committee:

For the record, my name is William Thomas, and I am Director of Children, Youth and Families for the Washington County Department of Health and Human Services. As I am unable to attend today's committee hearing, I am submitting this written testimony in support of HB 2626.

**This bill would provide critical and much-needed bonding authority for financing grants to school districts to pay for acquisition, construction or improvement of school-based health centers (SBHCs).** I understand that the sponsors of the bill are proposing \$4,000,000 in bonding authority, which would be a huge boost to SBHC development throughout Oregon.

**Over the past nine years the Washington County Department of Health and Human Services has supported a broad, community-based initiative for increasing access to health care through developing five new cost-effective and sustainable SBHCs in our county.** Our partners - Beaverton, Hillsboro and Tigard-Tualatin School Districts and Virginia Garcia Memorial Health Center - have built three of these SBHCs with \$500,000 federal construction grants from the Health Resources Services Administration (HRSA). **Without the three HRSA construction grants our new SBHCs would not have been developed, and since the appropriation of these HRSA funds is exhausted and hasn't been renewed by Congress, the lack of available construction funds jeopardizes our ability to continue expanding SBHCs.**

In 2006 when we began our development efforts there was one SBHC in Washington County, which was only accessible to 600 students at an alternative high school in the Beaverton School District. Now we have new SBHCs at **Beaverton High School**, at **Century High School** in the Hillsboro School District, at **Forest Grove High School** for serving students in the Banks, Forest Grove and Gaston School Districts, and at **Tigard High School**. In May we will be opening a new sustainable SBHC at **Tualatin High School** to provide primary care, mental health and oral health services accessible to students in both the Sherwood and Tigard-Tualatin School Districts.

**With the opening of the Tualatin High SBHC, children and youth ages 0-17 throughout Washington County will have access to at least one SBHC located at a general education high school in or near the school district in which they reside, whether they are 0-6, are enrolled in a public or private school or are home-schooled.** But as successful as our local development efforts have been in addressing unmet needs, six SBHCs are woefully inadequate for providing accessible, affordable and convenient health care to 138,000 Washington County children and youth. And we still have nine more general education high schools without SBHCs.

**This bill is greatly needed to expand and protect Oregon's investments in education and health care.** I strongly encourage members of the House Committee on Health Care to amend HB 2626 as needed, and send it to the House Floor with a Do-Pass Recommendation.