

February 16, 2015

To: Senate Workforce and House Business and Labor Committees
From: Health Care for All Oregon

Re: Support of SB 454 and HB 2005

Dear Chairs Dembrow and Holvey; and Committee Members,

Health Care for All Oregon is a statewide coalition of over 100 organizations dedicated to health reform efforts leading to universal, publicly funded health care. We have 14 local chapters and our database of statewide supporters is nearing 15,000 Oregonians. Over 100 small business owners and 120 physicians are among our statewide supporters.

The Health Care for All Oregon Board recently voted to join Oregon Health Equity Alliance and endorse its health equity agenda, including supporting SB 453 and HB 2005 to create a statewide sick leave policy in Oregon.

A state sick leave policy helps fulfill two of HCAO's founding principles - universality and equity. 95% of Oregonians are now covered by health insurance or other plans, however what good is coverage if a worker can't take time off to go to the doctor? Were we to achieve universal health care tomorrow, what becomes of the 47% of private-sector workers who don't have paid sick leave, many of whom can't afford to take the time off to seek care?

Many of the 71% of low-wage workers in Oregon who don't get paid sick leave are from communities of color. They often face even greater challenges to taking time off from work. If loss of income was not enough, loss of one's job for taking a sick day is still legal under Oregon law.

Please join cities, counties and states across America in taking this historic step towards improving public health and basic worker protections by passing SB 454 and HB 2005.

Respectfully yours,



Lee Mercer, President
Health Care for All-Oregon (HCAO)