

March 6, 2015

To: House Committee on Health Care
From: Health Care for All Oregon

Re: Support of HB 2934

Chair Greenlick 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 members.

The Health Care for All Oregon Board recently voted to join Oregon Health Equity Alliance and endorse its health equity agenda, including supporting HB 2934 to require Oregon Health Authority to submit a blueprint for a Basic Health Plan to the Centers of Medicare and Medicaid Services.

Implementing a Basic Health Plan would help fulfill three of HCAO's founding principles – universality, affordability and equity. 70% of Oregon's uninsured are low-income or working poor, many of whom remain uninsured as premiums are out of reach. Additionally, 10,000 Oregonians who would otherwise be eligible for Medicaid are excluded by 1996 Welfare Reform including a number of Pacific islanders and permanent resident immigrants.

Many low-wage workers in Oregon who cannot afford health care are from communities of color. Establishing a Basic Health Plan in Oregon would be a step forward towards creating health equity for these communities.

In all 87,600 Oregonians would be eligible for a Basic Health Plan offering benefits mirroring OHP Plus. Under this ACA waiver the Basic Health Plan will expand health care accessibility and affordability to a large group of low-income families with no impact on the state budget. This seems like a clear win-win step towards universal coverage.

Health Care for All Oregon enthusiastically encourages your passage of HB 2934.

Respectfully yours,



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