



**FAMILY FORWARD**  
**OREGON**

*Smart policies for today's families.*

April 15, 2015

Testimony in Support of HB 3517: Health Care for All Kids  
Submitted by Kate Newhall, Family Forward

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 3517. No child in Oregon should be denied health care services and yet there are currently over 17,600 children in Oregon who are excluded from services implemented by the Oregon Health Authority (OHA). **HB 3517 is a step in the right direction and will allow, but not require, OHA to assist with medical services for these children.**

Family Forward is committed to advancing policies that support families and help them succeed, both in the workplace and at home. Our mission is to create a family-friendly Oregon where all families can be economically secure and have the time it takes for work and family responsibilities. Today, too many families are forced to sacrifice one or the other. Family Forward supports policies, like Health Care for All Kids, that make economic stability more achievable for Oregon families.

Every child needs access to health care services to stay healthy and succeed in school. Studies show that healthy kids get better grades, attend school more often and behave better in class. However, some children are currently excluded from services provided by OHA and, as a result, are not able to receive critical health care services. This has long-term impacts on a child's academic success and throughout life.

While HB 3517 is a step in the right direction for children's health services, it is also a public health measure for all Oregonians. It will allow the Oregon Health Authority to provide medical assistance, within available funds, to low income children residing in Oregon. It doesn't require services be provided, but rather allows OHA to step in if there is a public health necessity, like a contagious disease outbreak. Without this fix, OHA will be unable to provide services to these children, even in the event of a public health emergency. By limiting OHA's ability to provide services in this capacity, we are putting the health of all Oregonians at risk.

**Please support HB 3517. All children deserve a healthy start in life.**