



April 15, 2015

Chair Greenlick and Members of the House Committee on Health Care,

Thank you for the opportunity to express Oregon Primary Care Association's support of HB 3517, which makes it possible for more children to be eligible for medical care and access the health services that would give them the healthiest start to their lives. This bill is a step forward for a stronger and healthier Oregon.

OPCA is the association of Oregon's 32 Community Health Centers (also known as Federally Qualified Health Centers – or FQHCs). These nonprofit health centers operate more than 200 health clinic sites across the state, and are where over 393,000 Oregonians receive primary care – including integrated medical, dental and behavioral health services.

As primary care providers for many of Oregon's underserved communities, Community Health Centers see the depth of need for basic health care experienced by the young, uninsured Oregonians we serve. We know that these children have limited options to access care. Their families are likely to be low-income and tend to work for employers who do not offer family health insurance benefits. In a public health crisis, all Oregon's health providers need to be to reach low income children with necessary services.

HB 3517 would remove existing barriers to providing medical assistance to these children if funding becomes available and if it is necessary do so in order to meet Oregon's health care goals. The exclusions these children face undermine the health of all Oregonians. We have a public health responsibility to ensure and protect the health of every Oregonian and their communities from preventable and serious public health threats.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 3517.

Craig Hostetler, Executive Director