



Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon

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May 11th, 2015

Testimony v1

Senate Health Committee

RE: Yes on HB 2934

Dear Chair Monnes-Anderson and Members of the Committee,

I am Kristina Narayan, here today as a policy associate with the Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon, or APANO.

Our Asian Pacific Islander communities are the fastest growing in the country; this is a trend mirrored in Oregon. Our organization represents over 220,000 APIs who call Oregon home. While there are pockets of prosperity within our community, many continue to face systematic barriers to opportunity.

APANO has been deeply engaged with our communities, who continue to experience uninsurance and the crippling financial effects of acquiring culturally competent health care as consequence. We applaud the positive steps taken to improve and make Oregon's health care system more accessible, namely through the transition to CCOs and enrollment through Cover Oregon. However, even with these positive efforts many of Oregon's most vulnerable populations continue to fall through the cracks. With your help, we can begin to address these gaps.

Like many, our Asian and Pacific Islander communities are deeply connected to our families. Asian and Pacific Islanders have immigrated to the US and Oregon for a slurry of reasons, and many share similar stories. We are here, because you were there. Oregon's largest waves of Asian and Pacific Islander immigration is a direct result of military and economic interventions upon our native islands.

As our families work to reunite with their loved ones, with their children, parents, and grandparents, many of these families face hardships with regard to job loss and poverty. While all Oregonians are susceptible to these hurdles, Asian and Pacific Islander communities are disproportionately affected by these realities. We face additional barriers that a Basic Health Plan may begin to address.



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APANO supports HB 2934 because an Oregon Basic Health Program has the potential to eliminate disparities within two populations currently excluded from the Oregon Health Plan. This includes Pacific Islanders from the Marshall Islands, Palau and Micronesia who have immigrated to the US seeking education and health services, prompted by our ongoing military interests in their home nations. We refer to this relationship as the Compact of Free Association, or COFA. COFA permits these Islanders to reside, work and live in the United States legally. Basic Health would also include legal permanent residents who face the federal 5 year waiting period for Medicaid, a significant portion of whom are also Asian and Pacific Islanders.

An Oregon Basic Health program may provide access, with federal financial support, for these communities who are currently ineligible for state services.

We believe all Oregonians should have equal access to health care and we are not alone. APANO, along with 14 partners comprised of providers, labor representatives and community organizations, including the Oregon Health Equity Alliance, have formed a coalition in support of HB 2934. We believe it is a measured step, among the many strides taken last session, to continue the conversation as to how Basic Health can potentially address health inequities and improve efficiencies of Oregon's overall health care system. We thank you for your time and commitment to the health and social equity of all Oregonians. We hope you will continue to do so by supporting HB 2934. Thank you.