



240 N Broadway Suite 115
Portland OR

February 1, 2016

Dear Chair Greenlick, Vice Chairs and Members of the Health Care Committee,

The Oregon Health Equity Alliance (OHEA) is a collective of 40 regional and state partners who work to improve the health and wellbeing of all Oregonians through community-driven strategies that promote education, advocacy, and policy change. We strongly support HB 4071- COFA Premium Assistance as it is step towards ensuring health care coverage for more Oregonians. Providing affordable, comprehensive coverage reflects our state's values: Every person and every family in Oregon matters.

While coverage gaps have declined through recent federal and state health reform efforts, there are still over 383,000 Oregonians — roughly one in 10 — who are uninsured. There is an estimated 3,000 COFA immigrants in Oregon. Since many COFA citizens work for low wages, many would likely qualify for Medicaid except for their immigration status. Instead, they go uninsured because they cannot afford health insurance even with federal subsidies. HB 4071 would establish a COFA Premium Assistance Program administered by the Department of Consumer and Business Services to provide financial assistance with health care premiums and out-of-pocket costs for about 1,500 COFA- Pacific Islanders in Oregon.

We applaud the great work done by DCBS, Oregon Health Authority, Rep. Olson, the COFA Stakeholder Group, and many community members to develop a plan to create this essential Premium Assistance program. It is time to truly [Mend the Gap](#) to ensure that all Oregonians reach their full potential.

OHEA urges your full support of HB 4071. Thank you for your commitment to our communities.

Sincerely,

Oregon Health Equity Alliance