

Providence Health & Services
4400 N.E. Halsey St., Building 2
Suite 599
Portland, OR 97213
www.providence.org/oregon



February 3, 2016

The Honorable Alissa Keny-Guyer
Chair, House Committee on Human Services
State Capitol
Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: House Bill 4144, Increase utilization of Earned income tax credit

Dear Representative Keny-Guyer and members of the committee:

Providence Health & Services' commitment to fulfilling our Mission extends far beyond the doors of our hospitals and clinics. We are working with community and business organizations to identify and remove causes of persistent poverty and advocate for public policies that promote social justice.

As part of the work to lead these efforts within the community, I currently serve as Chair of the Oregon Business Council's Poverty Reduction Task Force. The task force has set an ambitious goal of reducing the poverty rate to below 10 percent by 2020. Increasing utilization of the Earned Income Tax Credit, the largest federal self-sufficiency program, is fundamental to meeting that goal.

Currently, although one in five Oregon children live in poverty, we have the lowest EITC utilization rate in the country at 73.4 percent and it is estimated that Oregonians are leaving upwards of 124 million federal dollars unclaimed. By understanding which individuals are not utilizing the tax credit, educating Oregonians about the opportunity and increasing support for filing tax returns - House Bill 4144 is likely to significantly increase the number of Oregon families that file for EITC.

The urgent poverty situation in Oregon requires a reevaluation of the effectiveness and utilization of EITC. As one of our country's most historically effective anti-poverty measures, credited with successfully reducing income inequality and lifting children out of poverty - we must do more as a state to promote the EITC.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important issue; we hope you'll join Providence and the Oregon Business Council in supporting House Bill 4144.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dave Underriner".

Dave Underriner
Chief Executive Officer
Providence Health & Services - Oregon