

To: Rep. Mitch Greenlick and members of the House Health Committee

Date: February 27, 2017

Re: Improve Oregon Health Plan access and enrollment. Support for HB 2838!

Our organizations stand in support of legislative efforts to improve the enrollment process for low income and disabled Oregonians.

In light of a period of dramatic growth and change in Medicaid, it is understandable that the system for enrollment has experienced growing pains. For Oregonians who are trying to enroll in Medicaid their challenges have included:

- Four different enrollment processes between 2012 and 2016.
- Periodic long delays on the OHP phone line.
- Long delays between submitting applications and eligibility determination.
- Assignments to a plan other than the one they had prior to re-enrollment.
- Systems that work much less well if members have a language barrier, cognitive barriers, housing insecurity or limited abilities to access/navigate the Internet.
- Disruption in care.
- Disruption in the ability to refill necessary pharmaceuticals.

We recognize that the Oregon Health Authority has been under constant change and stress. The shortcomings in the enrollment and eligibility process are likely a byproduct of these pressures. To relieve some of that pressure we support legislation which would better coordinate Oregon Health Plan enrollment assistance between the OHA and all community resources including CCOs, local government, non-profits and community health workers.

There are some federal limitations to what CCOs may do to support re-enrollment. However, CCOs are eager to provide better customer service to member in the enrollment process. The Oregon Health Authority ought to be both responsive to this desire and creative in maximizing CCOs as a resource for members.

One specific solution that is attractive to us is giving CCOs some flexibility to financially support the application assister program. Application assisters are perhaps the single best option for members who need help in the enrollment process.

