



TO: House Healthcare Committee
FROM: Nancy Haque & Amy Herzfeld-Copple, Basic Rights Oregon
DATE: March 15, 2017
RE: Vote YES on HB 3391

Chair Mitch Greenlick and Members of Committee:

On behalf of Basic Rights Oregon, we are asking for your support for HB 3391, the Reproductive Health Equity Act. Basic Rights Oregon works to ensure that all lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer Oregonians experience equality. This legislation is a necessary step in the right direction to ensure that all transgender Oregonians have access to lifesaving care.

We support the broad goals of this bill—to improve access to reproductive health care, which is critical to the health and economic security of all Oregonians. The Reproductive Health Equity Act establishes coverage for a full spectrum of reproductive health services regardless of income, citizenship status, gender identity and type of insurance.

We specifically want to emphasize the inclusion of gender identity in this bill. While Oregon is on the forefront of LGBTQ equality nationally thanks to the great work of this Legislature, transgender Oregonians continue to face discrimination when accessing health care despite our progress at the state and local levels.

We have made great strides in expanding access to health care through the Oregon Health Plan and have an explicit non-discrimination bulletin from the Department of Consumer and Business Services related to gender-affirming care for carriers regulated by department. However, denials persist because carriers that are regulated out of state are not required to comply with our state bulletin. In the 2015 US Trans Survey, one in four respondents reported experiencing a problem in the past year with their insurance related to being transgender, such as being denied coverage for care related to gender transition or being denied coverage for routine care because they were transgender.

This bill will specifically help transgender and gender-nonconforming Oregonians who need access to services often categorized as “women’s” health care, including gender-specific cancer screenings and the full range of reproductive health services. Unfortunately, when coverage is dependent on one’s gender marker, procedural barriers can hinder access to this necessary and life-saving care.

By supporting HB 3391, the Reproductive Health Equity Act, you will help reduce health care discrimination for transgender Oregonians.

Thank you,

Two handwritten signatures in black ink. The first signature is "N. Haque" and the second is "A. Herzfeld-Copple".

Nancy Haque & Amy Herzfeld-Copple
Co-Executive Directors