



April 5, 2017

The Honorable Peter Courtney  
900 Court St. NE, S-201  
Salem, Oregon 97301

The Honorable Tina Kotek  
900 Court St. NE, Rm. 269  
Salem, Oregon 97301

Dear President Courtney and Speaker Kotek:

I am writing to you today on behalf of Our House, to share our concern that proposed legislation, HB 2387, could potentially freeze the critical research work that is being done in Oregon to combat HIV and other diseases.

Our House has been a part of the Portland community since 1988. We provide integrated health and housing services to low-income individuals with HIV. Guided by compassion, collaboration and respect, we provide 24-hour specialized care, supportive services, and independent housing with support services. With the help and support of our staff and new innovative treatments, people in our community living with HIV are leading longer, healthier lives. With this, our staff is faced with addressing other health issues such as diabetes or heart disease that are often exacerbated by HIV. Our House has nearly 30 years of experience providing healthcare and support for people with HIV and hope we can also help other people with chronic diseases. In order to do so, we rely heavily on new and improved, breakthrough treatments, therapies and medications for our patients. HB 2387 would slow down the necessary research and innovation imperative to living with a chronic disease such as HIV.

As a society, we should support a policy climate that encourages investment in breaking the frontier of medicine. The gains to individual patients and society from new treatments are immense, and are simply not captured in the narrow focus on individual data points contemplated by this bill. Not only does innovation bring new hope to sufferers of deadly diseases, but it reduces costs across the health care system by reducing hospitalizations, surgeries, and doctor visits. Breakthrough treatments for HIV have already been found to be successful; a recent study by the National Institutes of Health showed that people living with HIV who were in medical treatment for the virus were 93% less likely to transmit the virus sexually. In addition, OHSU is currently working towards an HIV vaccine; this incredible work is being done in our home state and we cannot let this work be hindered by HB 2387.

While we support measures to lower health care costs, the lives of our residents and clients rely on medical innovation here in Oregon to help them lead longer, healthier lives. Our residents and clients are waiting for better treatments and a cure for HIV. We hope policy will encourage, not hinder, advancements toward that goal.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nancy Sellers". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Interim Executive Director  
Our House

cc: The Honorable Ginny Burdick  
The Honorable Jennifer Williamson  
Senate Committee on Health Care Members  
House Committee on Health Care Members