

My name is Fatima Preciado, I am 18 years old. I am a DACA recipient, first generation college student at Portland State University studying Social Work and Political Science. I am also the Community Engagement intern at Causa, Oregon's Latino Immigrant Rights organization. I was born in the city of Apatzingan Mexico, due to financial reasons my parents chose to migrate to the United States in hope of a better and brighter future filled with opportunity and hope for their children. At a very young age, my siblings and I were forced to adapt to a foreign country and learn a new language. Together we learned and practiced how to act and sound like all the other kids, yet our racial and economic background always alienated and excluded us from the other children. Because my siblings and I lacked proper health insurance we were denied the right to live a normal childhood filled with joyful and untroubled play time. Fear and worry instead consumed my every day childhood. Growing up I found it so frustrating when my mother would shout out things like "you can't play as rough as the other kids, you might break a bone", or "don't you dare catch another cold we can't afford any more visits to the doctor". Now, I am much older and able to comprehend my family's situation and truly appreciate my mother's words, yet no child should be raised in a worried and fearful environment where they are denied the privilege to express and practice fun and active childhood experiences such as participating in competitive sports.

My siblings and I were fortunate enough to attend classes in a school district that offered health insurance for all children including those without U.S citizenship at a very affordable price for low income families, yet this medical coverage failed to properly and equally serve all of my family's needs. For example, my oldest sister is intellectually disabled and suffers from epileptic seizures. In order to control and prevent the seizures from occurring, my sister is required to take prescribed medication daily. The health insurance my siblings and I had growing up, covered the basic physical checkups, but did not cover medical expenses . Therefore, my mother struggled severely when it came to acquiring enough income to purchase my sister's medication, and there were even moments where my sister went weeks without taking her medication causing her to suffer severe uncontrollable epileptic seizures. I remember there would be nights when I would awake from my mother's frightened screams as she watched my eldest sister uncontrollably experience an epileptic seizure. On my mother's only day off, my family and I would travel the city in search of resources that would help provide a discount or reduced price for my sister's medication, yet we would come across many obstacles and barriers such as the lack of bilingual assistance and interpretation and the unwillingness from various resources to help my sister due to my family's undocumented status. After weeks of searching for resources, my family finally came across a local program that covered half of my sister's medication expenses.

The inconsistency and unjust treatment my family faced and continues to face through a failing healthcare system proves the necessary and immediate demand for equal access to medical attention for all children, not just some. All children need and deserve to have access to medical attention for the better of all children living in the state of Oregon. Undocumented children are apart of our communities and are attending public schools with other children, yet many of these undocumented children are attending school while they are sick because they are not receiving the necessary medical attention they need, so not only are we jeopardizing the health of one child, but we are also exposing other medically insured children to suffer and we are increasing the chances of disease and viruses to spread more rapidly and uncontrollably.

As an undocumented first generation Mexican student, I have experienced first hand the unjust and unethical treatment immigrants face daily in this country. I have witnessed and experienced racial discrimination, labor exploitation, persecution, unsafe working conditions, fear of driving, terror of deportation, denied federal aid for college education, lack of bilingual resources, and have been denied the right to equal medical care coverage. In a society that has systematically established and enforced oppression towards everything that defines me and represents me, an Undocumented person of color, female, low-income, who can only help but ask myself where do we draw the line?

Legislators who will be voting on the issue on providing health insurance for all kids, I ask you to critically analyze the living situation in which children who are denied medical access find themselves in, and think about that the fact that these children are not just children they are the future leaders, doctors, teachers, engineers, of this country. The state of Oregon must protect and provide equal opportunity for all children, every child deserves the right to health insurance. All children deserve to live a healthy, strong, and joyful childhood, so that they can grow to become and accomplish anything they dream of.