



March 23, 2020

Dear Co-Chairs Roblan and Holvey and Members of the Committee,

As advocates and champions for reproductive freedom, NARAL Pro-Choice Oregon believe that all Oregonians need equitable access to the full range of reproductive health care services, including abortion care, preventing unintended pregnancy, and bearing healthy children.

As the coronavirus spreads, the impacts will touch all of us. We are grateful for the leadership of Governor Brown, our legislative champions, agency staff, and local leaders for taking immediate action through emergency declarations and preventative measures to help curb the growth of this pandemic to save lives.

We are working closely and stand in solidarity with Planned Parenthood health centers, Lovejoy Surgicenter, and reproductive health care providers in clinics and hospitals across our state who remain open and are seeing and treating patients, while working to lower exposure and the spread of this disease. Each facility is implementing new policies to preserve personal protection equipment (PPE) and focus on urgent health care, including providing essential health services like medication and surgical abortions that are both critical and time-sensitive.

While everyone in Oregon will be impacted by this global pandemic, it is absolutely critical that we assure and clarify that access to reproductive care, including abortion, will remain available to all Oregonians.

Specifically we would advocate for the following:

- Request OHA issue additional guidance to providers and the public that clarify abortion and the full spectrum of reproductive services, including abortion, gender-affirming care, and family planning, are essential health care that cannot be delayed. These services are time-sensitive, critical, and already difficult for many to access. In particular, while abortion is an incredibly safe procedure, it cannot be delayed without significant ramifications that could negatively impact a patient's life, safety, health, and well-being.
- We support Oregon Health Authority's (OHA) work to reduce and remove barriers to utilizing telemedicine for those who receive health coverage through Oregon Health Plan. More work must be done to ensure even more capacity is possible. To this point, reimbursement is critical and should be provided in parity with comparable in-person services.
- While telemedicine may decrease exposure and keep health care professionals, it is important to recognize that medication abortion it can only be accessed during a very



specific window of time. We must assume that this health crisis may lead to some patients experiencing delays in their ability to access services, and the network of trained surgical abortion providers in Oregon is very small. There are very few people and places that are able to provide abortion care beyond 13 weeks. We must work to maintain baseline staffing for this specific network.

- We must address Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) needs for providers as supplies are being rationed for essential health care services only. Again, we must stress the importance of clarifying that services like abortions, contraceptives and gender-affirming services are essential and delays to care may bring serious consequences that impact a person's life, health, and well-being, and providers of these services will require access to PPE.

Thank you for your consideration. NARAL Pro-Choice Oregon looks forward to continuing to work with you on these policy solutions to serve our communities.

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NARAL Pro-Choice Oregon