



Memorandum

To: Senator Gelser, chair, Senate Committee on Human Services
Senator Heard, vice-chair, Senate Committee on Human Services
Members of the Senate Committee on Human Services

From: Danielle Sobel, Policy Director, Oregon Primary Care Association
Marty Carty, Policy Manager, Oregon Primary Care Association

Date: February 21, 2019

Re: Support for SB 727

On behalf of the Oregon Primary Care Association (OPCA), we respectfully request your support for SB 727. OPCA is a non-profit organization, with a mission to support Oregon's 32 community health centers, also known as federally qualified health centers, in leading the transformation of primary care to achieve health equity for all. Community health centers deliver integrated primary care, including dental and behavioral health services, to over **430,000 Oregonians annually**. Community health centers are providers within the CCO networks, providing care to Oregon's underserved populations, including **one in four Oregon Health Plan members**.

In addition to providing high quality integrated medical, dental and behavioral health care, health centers are committed to understanding the circumstances of their patients' lives and addressing those determinants of health, such as food insecurity, housing, literacy and job training. Food insecurity is one of the most commonly addressed social determinants of health addressed in our health centers, with innovative practices that have included hosting onsite farmers markets, vouchers to community grocers, classes on healthy eating and ensuring the family is connected to WIC and SNAP resources. Health centers see firsthand how a lack of healthy fresh food and food insecurity can lead to **poor health outcomes** and **increased cost to the healthcare system**. Many families must choose between putting food on the table and other important expenses like rent and medical bills. Moreover, individuals suffering from food insecurity are less likely to eat healthy diets, take medication as prescribed, and maintain jobs and/or school attendance – all leading to downstream health complications.

We know that **1 in 6 Oregonians rely on SNAP benefits to feed their families**. It is critical that we ensure that those receiving SNAP benefits have consistent and affordable access to a healthy food supply. Ensuring continued access to farmers markets and retail food outlets where the patient's SNAP benefits go further, benefits both Oregon's economy and expands on an already successful program that supports low-income Oregonians.

SB 727 is an upstream approach to improving health outcomes for patients and reducing health care costs for the state and federal government. We urge your support of this bill as an opportunity to be part of an upstream solution that both improves health and supports Oregon's agriculture economy.

Oregon Primary Care Association
Leading the transformation of care to achieve health equity for all
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