



Memorandum

To: Co-Chair Girod, Co-Chair, Holvey
Members of the Joint Subcommittee on Capital Construction

From: Danielle Sobel, OPCA State and Federal Policy Director
Marty Carty, OPCA Policy Senior Manager

Date: April 12, 2019

Re: Support for HB 5005 – Permanent Supportive Housing

On behalf of the Oregon Primary Care Association (OPCA), we respectfully request your support for HB 5005 and the Governor's request for \$50 million in General Obligation, Article XI-Q bonds to build permanent supportive housing across Oregon.

Many of Oregon's community health centers serve patients without stable housing. Providers and care teams see firsthand how a lack of safe and affordable housing can lead to poor health outcomes and increased cost to the healthcare system. Individuals who don't have stable, secure places to call home are less likely to eat healthy diets, take medication as prescribed, and maintain jobs and/or school attendance – all leading to downstream health complications.

Permanent supportive housing (PSH) is a critical part of the wide spectrum of affordable housing and supports that communities can make available. OHA in collaboration with OHCS have outlined the critical need for the expansion of PSH and the vital role it plays in making homelessness and institutionalization brief, non-recurring events. It can also play a part in the reduction of costs to the state as well as local governments. A 2016 Center for Outcomes and Research (CORE) study of affordable housing and supports in Portland found that costs to health care systems were 14 percent lower for residents of PSH; a year after moving into affordable housing:

- outpatient primary care utilization had increased by 20 percent
- emergency department use had fallen by 18 percent, and,
- residents reported that access to care had improved by 40 percent and that the quality of care they received had improved by 38 percent.

We also know that the need for PSH in Oregon far outstrips the amount of PSH available; the most recent point in time count, found over 5,000 unsheltered homeless individuals and nearly 900 families and unaccompanied youth. To better assist our health centers, who do use screening tools to assess social needs outside the patient's immediate medical needs and know who may be unsheltered, additional resources to get the patient housed, like vouchers for PSH, are significant tools to improve patient outcomes. Long term rental assistance vouchers, in tandem with housing that includes some level of case management (like PSH), help stabilize families with children who have struggled with housing stability. We support investing in permanent supportive housing assistance and vouchers as an opportunity to leverage this resource and establish a partnership between our health centers and OCHS, with the common goal of achieving, long term, affordable housing for patients and their families.

We believe HB 5005 is an opportunity to provide additional significant investment in permanent supportive housing and specifically the associated vouchers and supportive services for people who, without support in their tenancy, may not be successful in maintaining stable housing, and who conversely, without housing, may not be as successful in using health care and other services to achieve and maintain recovery, health and wellness.

We urge you to support HB 5005 because everyone deserves a safe, stable place to call home.