



Oregon AFSCME Council 75 Urges your “YES” vote on HB 2231A

Health Care Interpreters are vital to ensure people with Limited English Proficiency are able to communicate in settings that range in complexity and intimacy, whether in an office with a health care provider or a community meeting. Dedication to accuracy and depth of knowledge of language and culture are critical to providing quality language access services, that include interpreting services, document translations, and accommodations for visual impairments.

Unfortunately, the dedication to providing quality essential to interpretation and translation services isn't currently rewarded or supported in Oregon. HB 2231A addresses this.

**HB 2231 will enable interpreters to negotiate clear terms of employment so that they can be prepared for our wide variety of assignments and provide the necessary services to their clients.**

Substandard contract terms result in an unskilled workforce. According to the “2016 Southern Washington and Oregon Language Access Survey” by Oregon Health Care Interpreters Association, amongst health care interpreters in the State of Oregon:

47% have had less than 60hrs of interpreter training (13% have zero training)

62% work less than 20hrs a week

65% earn less than \$22/hr

In the face of poor employment conditions, interpreting becomes a side job, done by family members and untrained individuals who are unlikely to seek and pay for additional training, certification. Unskilled interpreting services also result in mistakes in diagnoses, misunderstandings of care instructions, procedures being performed without truly informed consent, extra tests being ordered “just in case,” compromised confidentiality, cultural misunderstandings, and much more.

**HB 2231 as collective bargaining will assist interpreters in achieving industry standards, call for accountability and transparency for all involved parties, and - as a result - improve health outcomes for patients while reducing health care costs.**

Currently, spoken language interpreting agencies do not negotiate terms with independent contractors and instead dictate the terms often well below industry standards that support a qualified workforce. Industry standards include cancellation notices, pay for mileage and other related items for reimbursement, and payment for the full time scheduled and continuing education and certification. These standards support quality services that ensure people receiving the interpretation services are receiving the best possible care, diagnoses and information that they use to make decisions.

**Please help raise the standards of Oregon’s health care interpretation services by voting “YES” on HB 2231A.**