



Memorandum

To: Chair Sanchez, Vice-Chair Bynum, Vice-Chair Sprenger
Members of the House Committee on Judiciary

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

Date: February 5, 2020

Re: Support for House Bill 4065

On behalf of the Oregon Primary Care Association (OPCA), we respectfully request your support for HB 4065.

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 433,000 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.

Every Oregonian should have access to health care. We know that access to care is one of the single most effective ways to ensure that children and their families receive the preventative health and medical care they need to thrive in school, our workforce, and life. Oregonians travel to get to work, to the grocery store, to church, to community events, and to health clinics—and must generally travel by car because of limited public transportation options outside of Oregon's urban centers, which makes driving a daily necessity.

Debt-based license suspensions expose people experiencing poverty to cascading consequences. Suspending driver licenses for inability to pay traps individuals in a cycle of poverty by removing their ability to get to and from their job, pursue new work opportunities or care for their family. Debt-based license suspensions don't make our roads safer. But they do create impossible choices for people in poverty. When a person loses driving privileges, unemployment often follows. Many jobs require driving privileges, even if driving is not a part of the job. Individuals who are unable to pay are often forced to choose between losing their job—and their ability to pay back their debt— or continue driving.

Health centers provide essential primary care services, but are only one part of the overall health system that families need to access health care. And we know that without transportation to health care, many patients unfortunately delay accessing primary care. Scholars who focus on the health system identify transportation as a limitation that prevents underserved individuals from accessing medical care, which reduces the utilization of preventive medical care and increases the risk of illness leading to more costly visits to the emergency room. For these reasons, we strongly believe all Oregonians should have access to a driver license.

This bill is a critical step toward ensuring all Oregonians have access to health care. OPCA recognizes that having a driver license not only increases access to health care services, but decreases health-related disparities. We hope that you will join us in support of HB 4065.