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**Planned Parenthood Advocates of Oregon**

February 6, 2020

Chair Salinas, Vice-Chairs Nosse and Hayden, and Members of the House Committee on Health Care,

As the state's leading political voice for reproductive health care, Planned Parenthood Advocates of Oregon urges strong support for HB 4029. Planned Parenthood health centers across Oregon are proud to see patients regardless of their immigration status. The staff and leadership at the health centers see firsthand the ways in which harsh immigration enforcement restricts families' access to health care in this country. No one's health should be compromised because of their immigration status or their income. The new federal charge rule contributes to immigrants' already very real fear of deportation and family separation, and continues to drive more and more people into the shadows — making it harder to work, access health care, and live a full life.

The new federal charge rule dramatically expands the grounds on which certain immigrants may be denied entry into the U.S. or an adjustment to their status (e.g., obtaining green cards) based on their past receipt of certain public benefits, including nutrition assistance, public housing, and health care (e.g., the Oregon Health Plan). During the 2019 session, the Oregon state legislature expanded charity care with a law that supports costs for patients who would qualify for the Oregon Health Plan. However, charity care is the payer of last resort, which means that many hospitals have policies that ban people from accessing charity care if they do not apply for the Oregon Health Plan. With the public charge rule in effect, those hospital policies now make low-income immigrants choose between having affordable health care or becoming ineligible for legal permanent residency. The collateral effect is people not seeking health care services, which could result in unintended pregnancies, untreated sexually transmitted infections, and undetected cancer. House Bill 4029 would prohibit hospitals and non-profit clinics from denying charity care to people who decline to access to the Oregon Health Plan.

Planned Parenthood Advocates of Oregon refuses to stand by silently as immigrants, many of whom are part of the Planned Parenthood community and rely on Planned Parenthood for health care, face increasing barriers to health care and the potential of being ripped apart from their families. We strongly disagree with these harmful, unfair policies. Planned Parenthood advocates for and provides access to quality, affordable health care regardless of immigration status or citizenship. HB 4029 would allow individuals with certain immigration statuses to get the health services they need without impacting their ability to pursue a legal immigration status in the United States. Oregonians who are immigrants with low-incomes should not have to choose between accessing health care or jeopardizing their path to citizenship or legal immigration status. We respectfully urge your support for HB 4029.

Sincerely,

Emily McLain  
Executive Director  
Planned Parenthood Advocates of Oregon