



Support House Bill 4029

Thank you for the opportunity to express OHSU's support of House Bill 4029, which will protect vulnerable Oregonians from the impending expansion of the public charge rule being implemented by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security on February 24.

OHSU is Oregon's only public academic health center educating Oregon's next generation of health care providers, providing life-saving care to all Oregonians, and discovering new innovations to improve health outcomes. This new federal rule directly challenges our mission to improve the health and wellbeing of all Oregonians. Physicians, trainees and staff across OHSU work tirelessly to ensure that all of our patients, regardless of status, have access to the health services they need.

The federal rule will not only penalize immigrants for using health care benefits for which they legally qualify, it will also severely impact immigrant communities across many public programs such as SNAP Food Benefits and housing assistance, resulting in fewer people seeking out the support their families need and further exacerbating health disparities in Oregon and across the nation.

While pregnant women and children receiving Medicaid were exempted in the final rule, research shows that this type of regulation has the potential to deter those who still legally qualify for services, out of a misunderstanding of their own protected status or fear of jeopardizing the status of a family member. This will have wide-ranging implications for immigrant communities. Missed diagnoses, declining nutrition and reduced medication adherence for treatable conditions are just a few of the possible consequences of this rule that will cause preventable health crises in families.

It is critical that as we ensure that patients who are eligible and exempt from this rule are able to access Medicaid for quality, comprehensive health coverage.

We ask for your support of HB 4029 to protect all members of Oregon's communities from losing access to the health care services they need.