



White Bird Clinic

February 21, 2020

Dear Members of the Oregon Legislature,

White Bird Clinic has been a hub for innovative and unique healthcare services since 1969. As a Federally Qualified Health Center, we provide care to the neediest members of our community. As the crisis intervention service for Lane County and Eugene-Springfield's public safety system, we are a key agency in the continuum of care for our community's houseless population. The lack of emergency shelter options is a huge hole in our safety net. 75% of our county's 2019 Point in Time count were individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness, 87% (1,893 people) who reside in Eugene. The housing affordability crisis combined strict zoning laws and a lack of funding for shelter have caused a human rights crisis in size and scope that must be addressed immediately.

It is with this lens that we urge the committee to support the passage of HB 4001, which defines "emergency shelter," strengthens local government agencies' abilities to site qualifying emergency shelters, and funds low-barrier shelter operations. We know first-hand that people experiencing unsheltered homelessness suffer profound disparity in health and mortality compared to the general population. This legislation will bring much-needed funding to safeguard vulnerable people currently at severe risk of death or injury on the streets, and expedite the process of finally opening a public shelter for our community. We urge you to prioritize its passage.

Benjamin Brubaker, Clinic Co-Coordinator

Chris Hecht, Clinic Co-Coordinator