



**December 18, 2020**

Joint Interim Committee On The Third Special Session of 2020  
Oregon State Legislature  
900 Court St. NE, Salem, OR 97301

*RE: LC 18 Residential Tenancies and Health Equity*

Dear Co-Chairs and Members of the Joint Committee On The Third Special Session of 2020:

Health Share of Oregon writes this letter to endorse LC 18, which will extend the statewide eviction moratorium and provide necessary financial assistance to landlords and tenants reeling from the economic impact of COVID-19.

Health Share of Oregon is a CCO serving approximately 370,000 OHP members in Clackamas, Multnomah, and Washington counties. Many of our members have historically confronted barriers when seeking access to medical care and social service programs. COVID-19 has exacerbated these disparities further, as virus transmission has disproportionately harmed the BIPOC community and pushed a substantial portion of our membership towards financial collapse. It is for this reason that our CCO, a Medicaid organization, feels it is critical to weigh in.

We know that positive health outcomes and reliable shelter are inextricably linked. In normal times, we recognize the general fact that OHP members who retain stable housing are far more likely to live healthier lives. This remains especially true during a global pandemic. Statewide estimates establish that 20,000-40,000 *households* are at risk for eviction. There will be significant overlap between those owing back-rent, the OHP population generally, and Health Share's membership specifically. As a CCO committed to leading with race and promoting health equity, Health Share cannot ignore the fact that the BIPOC community will experience the disparate repercussions of resuming evictions. Estimates show that 56% of households at risk for evictions are Black, indigenous, or other people of color. Children also remain especially vulnerable to the enduring and destructive impact of experiencing eviction in a pandemic. Health Share's membership consists of 135,000 individuals who are under the age of 18. We estimate that 25% of households at risk for eviction have children.

We also recognize that housing instability is directly associated with higher health care costs. Failure to keep people in their homes will exacerbate the already fragile physical and behavioral health status of those experiencing hardship. Furthermore, it will impact efforts to limit community transmission of the virus. We must ensure that individuals who test positive or are exposed to family members who have tested positive, have the option of remaining at home to properly quarantine.

Though LC 18 is far from perfect, it is a good start. First and foremost, the eviction moratorium must be extended in a manner similar to Multnomah County's approach. Beyond that, we must come together to solve this. We cannot approach broader problems by merely extending the eviction moratorium alone. In doing so, we risk kicking the proverbial can farther down the road. Given the circumstances, Health Share believes that it is in the best interest of OHP members to pass LC 18 during the third special session of 2020.

Thank you for your time and consideration on this matter, and for the opportunity to share our perspective. If you have any follow-up questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to Health Share's Director of Public Policy and Communications, Yoni Kahn, via e-mail at [kahn-jochnowitz@healthshareoregon.org](mailto:kahn-jochnowitz@healthshareoregon.org).

Warm wishes,

James Schroeder, CEO  
Health Share of Oregon