



December 10, 2021

Join Interim Committee on The Second Special Session of 2021  
Oregon State Legislature  
900 Court St. NE, Salem, OR 97301

***Re: Special Session Housing Safe Harbor Bill***

Dear Co-Chair Beyer, Co-Chair Fahey, Co-Vice Chair Knopp, Co-Vice Chair Breese-Iverson and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of legislation that will provide critical tenant protections and eviction prevention resources to many members of the Oregon Health Plan (OHP). Health Share of Oregon is a Coordinated Care Organization (CCO) serving approximately 400,000 OHP members throughout Clackamas, Multnomah and Washington Counties. Health Share supports the tenant safeguards and investments proposed in this legislation because we understand that housing is health care.

As Oregon's largest CCO, Health Share takes seriously its responsibility to advocate for the comprehensive quality-of-life needs of our diverse membership. We recognize that health equity, and equity in general, can only be achieved when members of historically underserved and oppressed communities have stable housing alongside barrier-free access to quality health care. The OHP population throughout our state has been amongst those constituencies hardest hit by the recurring waves of catastrophe throughout the recent years. Our state has witnessed a steady increase in OHP enrollment throughout this period, as low-income individuals have experienced exponentially higher rates of job loss, lopsided levels of COVID-19 transmission and accumulated staggering amount of debt to keep their households afloat. Imagine facing eviction on top of all of that.

Health Share recognizes that housing insecurity has a direct link to poorer health outcomes. Individuals who lack a stable roof over their head are far less likely to manage chronic physical, behavioral or oral health conditions because their survival is at stake in more pressing arenas of life. Without guaranteeing basic shelter to comfort oneself and secure the wellbeing of loved ones, we risk pushing a population that is already disadvantaged further into a cycle of unmanaged health and debilitating poverty. For this reason, Health Share believes that it is important for a Medicaid organization such as ourselves to establish on the record that stable housing matters and it is intrinsic to achieving health equity.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to Yoni Kahn, Director of Public Policy, at [kahn-johnowitz@healthshareoregon.org](mailto:kahn-johnowitz@healthshareoregon.org).

Sincerely,

Yoni Kahn  
Director of Public Policy and Communications  
Health Share of Oregon