

## Health Care Interpretation Accountability Act

Health care interpreters are vital to ensure people with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) are able to communicate in settings that range in complexity and intimacy, whether in a health care provider's office or a community meeting. To ensure that people with LEP receive quality language access services, all health care interpreters must be qualified or certified throughout this state.

### **Problem:**

A current loophole allows health care interpretation services to hire untrained health care interpreters even though there are qualified or certified health care interpreters by the Oregon Health Authority available. The existing law also does not hold health care interpretation services accountable for working with unqualified or non-certified health care interpreters.

Furthermore, health care providers are not required to ensure they are working with health care interpreters who have all vaccines and testing recommended by the CDC for health care workers. Health care interpreters are also not provided with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and instead have to provide their own PPE in order to work for the provider.

Additional problems with existing law include:

- There is no clear complaint process for interpreters who experience wage or labor violations.
- Oregon law misclassifies health care interpreters as nonsubject workers which restricts health care interpreters from accessing workers' compensation.

### **Solution:**

**HB 2359 closes the current loophole by requiring interpretation services to work with certified or qualified health care interpreters registered with the health care interpreter registry maintained by the Oregon Health Authority.**

**HB 2359 also requires the Bureau of Labor and Industries to implement policies and processes to hold health care interpretation services accountable by imposing a fine if they do not work with qualified or certified health care interpreters.**

**HB 2359 grants the Oregon Health Authority to collaborate with the Bureau of Labor and Industries to investigate complaints and impose appropriate remedial measures or civil penalties.**

**To ensure that the health care interpreter workforce is professionalized, HB 2359 directs the Oregon Health Authority to work with the Oregon Council on Health Care Interpreters to design a program providing free or low cost training to ensure the qualification and certification of health care interpreters.**

**HB 2359 amends current law to classify health care interpreters as subject workers for purposes of workers compensation, employment related benefits and working conditions.**

**HB 2359 requires health care providers administer vaccines or provide testing that a health care interpreter does not have at no cost to the interpreter.**

**HB 2359 requires health care providers to provide interpreters PPE at no cost to the interpreter.**

**Summary**

HB 2359 will require health care providers and health care interpretation services work with Oregon Health Authority qualified or certified health care interpreters from the health care interpreter registry ensuring that people are provided the best interpretation services.

**Please help ensure health care providers and health care interpretation services work with qualified and certified health care interpreters by voting “YES” on HB 2359.**

