February 2, 2021

Support for HB 2360

Dear Chair Prusak, Vice Chairs Hayden and Salinas, and Members of the House Health Care Committee,

For the record, my name is Katie Shriver, and I represent the Service Employees International Union (SEIU). SEIU is an 85,000 member union in Oregon and SW Washington and a 2 million member union nationally. I am here to speak in support of HB 2360.

SEIU has been working on access to quality and affordable health care for our members and their families for over 50 years. Part of that work is organizing health care workers to have a voice in patient care, advocating for funding for critical health care services like Medicaid and Medicare and making sure that patients can afford the care they receive. SEIU is also a very diverse union representing health care workers, janitors, and others who are immigrants holding green cards.

In 2018 SEIU worked with community organizations, labor unions, and hospitals to expand Oregon's charity care policy and create clarity and consistency. Charity care is the payer of last resort for patients, and hospitals, clinics, community organizations, and labor unions should work to make sure all Oregonians have access to quality affordable health care. Hospitals in Oregon are doing that by signing Oregonians up for the Oregon Health Plan, and this work has been critical to Oregon achieving 94 percent coverage.

However, fear and confusion surrounding the public charge rule, especially after changes to the policy were proposed in 2019, has led immigrants to avoid enrolling in the Oregon Health Plan, and we worry that this confusion will linger even if and when the federal government changes the requirement. HB 2360 is needed to ensure that immigrants don't have to sign up for the Oregon Health Plan to receive charity care. The bill is supported by a large group of community advocates, hospitals, and labor unions. I am happy to answer any questions.