



March 12, 2021

To Whom it May Concern:

I am writing to you today to ask for your support of HB 2164, **Cover All People**.

As an early childhood advocacy organization with a mission to ensure every child in Oregon is prepared for school and life, Children's Institute strongly supports smart state investments proven to promote health and well-being for families and communities. We champion early investments in kids from prenatal to age eight to boost education and health outcomes for all Oregon's children.

This innovative pilot program, **Cover All People**, would provide health care coverage to medically underserved people including undocumented adults, DACA recipients, legal permanent residents and young adults who age out of Cover All Kids. Oregonians under 138% (190% for pregnant women) of the poverty level would be eligible.

Expanding health care coverage is one of the most effective health-promoting and poverty-reducing initiatives for families and communities. **Cover All People** would ensure that recipients receive timely and preventative health care. Ensuring all Oregonians have health care coverage and equitable access to comprehensive health care services is not only a way to build community well-being and resilience, it also promotes a strong economy. **Cover All People** would reduce health care costs borne by taxpayers by extending authority to cover a critical population and would strengthen the economy by supporting financial stability for individuals and communities.

The program is also a critical investment in addressing historical and systemic inequities in health care access and disparities in health outcomes. As you know, being uninsured disproportionately affects rural Oregonians, communities of color, and low-wage working families. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted significant racial and economic disparities in healthcare access and outcomes. Healthcare coverage is a tool to help ensure better care outcomes among communities who are medically underserved.

Investing in **Cover All People** will also boost long-term outcomes for kids, including improving health and learning outcomes. Children experience their most profound cognitive, physical, social, and emotional growth in the first few years of life. By the time children reach their third birthday, their brains are 80 percent developed. The quality of children's early relationships, experiences, and environments during this crucial period of growth sets the foundation for all future learning and lifelong health. Research demonstrates that when parents are insured, children gain better access to health care and experience improved health and well-being.

Children's Institute hopes that you will support HB 2164 - **Cover All People**. This is a smart investment for Oregon's children and communities.



Thank you for your leadership in transforming Oregon's health care system and for your commitment to ensuring equitable health outcomes for all Oregonians.

Sincerely,

Elena Rivera, MPH
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