



Testimony in Support of House Bill 3352

March 16, 2021

House Committee on Health Care

Deborah Riddick, JD RN

Good afternoon Chair Prusak, Vice Chairs Salinas and Hayden, and members of the committee. My name is Deborah Riddick. I am the Director of Public Policy and Government Relations for the Oregon Nurses Association (ONA). We represent 15,000 registered nurses and professional members, and the Nurse Practitioners of Oregon. ONA stands in strong support of HB 3352 which rename Health Care for All Oregon Children program as Health Care for All Oregon program and expand eligibility to adults who would qualify for Medicaid-funded state medical assistance program or for federal premium tax credits but for their immigration status.

ONA's membership has a long history of supporting the states efforts to extend comprehensive quality care to all of its residents. It's a goal that is in perfect alignment with our stated mission and vision to advocate for patients, our nursing practice, and nurses to improve Oregon's health care systems. The coverage Oregon provides for our children demonstrates the possibilities. However, the gains we've made in covering all kids and the outcomes we've achieved, are compromised, when the adults within those families go uncovered or have coverage that they can use do to costs, accessibility, responsiveness and failures break from tradition.

As evidenced by the pandemic, and long before, our system does serve all our residents equally. Fortunately, we are a state that has invested a lot of resources in addressing health systems transformation. The extension of HB 3352's coverage benefits brings the state one step closer to its goal of coverage for all its residents. Our most vulnerable and economically challenged residents need our support now, not later. Every day we delay leads to increase pain and suffering, and outsized ultimate costs to the system.

Oregon have had the opportunity to convene with some of the best minds in the state to help design the scaffolding to universal coverage. This work is far too important to be rushed. HB 3352 provides is consistent with our ongoing efforts and will position the state for eventual realization of health care as a right, not a privilege for some. ONA urges your support.