
Planned Parenthood Advocates of Oregon

March 16, 2021

Chair Prusak, Vice Chairs Hayden and Salinas and Members of the House Committee on Healthcare:

Planned Parenthood Advocates of Oregon (PPAO) respectfully requests the committee's support of Cover All People, HB 2164-3 and HB 3352. A significant portion of Planned Parenthood's patients rely on Medicaid, CAWEM, and the Reproductive Health Equity Fund for access to critical healthcare services. We believe that every Oregonian regardless of race, income, immigration status, or gender identity should have access to the healthcare they need and deserve without the fear of cost.

While the Oregon Health Plan is a critical source of healthcare for many, there remain significant gaps in health coverage for other vulnerable groups. Noncitizens are often shut out of Medicaid because federal law bars coverage for undocumented immigrants and for immigrants during their first five years of legal residency.

Oregon has done a lot of work to increase the availability of health insurance for individuals, but there is still more to be done. The Citizen Alien Waived Emergent Medical program (CAWEM) will cover medical emergencies and, for pregnant people, healthcare coverage during pregnancy and labor and delivery. CAWEM coverage, however, is very limited and inadequate for many. The Reproductive Health Equity Act, passed in 2017, provides coverage for the full range of sexual and reproductive health services to Oregonians who had been previously excluded from those benefits due to their documentation status, but that coverage is limited to those who can become pregnant.

Cover All Kids has been a critical and successful program that expanded health coverage to and improved health outcomes for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients and children with undocumented status who were at or below 305% of the federal poverty level. Providing access to those children after they turn 18, and to other adults who would qualify for OHP if not for their immigration status, will have a tremendous positive impact on the health and well-being of our communities.

Creating a Cover All People program would allow low-income Oregonians who would qualify for OHP if not for their immigration status to get the care they need and deserve. The creation of a Cover All People program would be a significant step in advancing health equity in our state. The COVID-19 pandemic has laid bare the glaring inequities in access to healthcare and safety experienced by many BIPOC and immigrant communities. The Latinx community makes up 13% of the population but counts for at least 26% of Oregon's COVID cases. Overrepresented in the ranks of essential workers, these taxpayers take on the burden of high health risks to keep our economy strong and our families fed, especially during the current pandemic.

Now is the time to create a Cover All People program that covers all adults who need it and would qualify for OHP, if not for their immigration status. PPAO urges your support for HB 3352 and HB 2164 -3.

Sincerely,
An Do
Interim Executive Director
Planned Parenthood Advocates of Oregon