

Many students and families have long relied on school-based health centers and school nurses to provide regular health services to youth. Even more so now, as schools reopen, many students will not have had access to health care and medication, and some will be facing new levels of trauma, anxiety, and stress as a result of the pandemic. Only 25% of school districts in Oregon have SBHCs and around 40% of school districts in Oregon do not provide any school nursing services. Black, Indigenous, People/Youth of Color are already being disproportionately impacted, and school health resources are often their only link to effective services. COVID-19 has shown us that we need to make an even greater commitment to setting up health systems in schools, particularly for students and families most impacted. I support this bill to allow some school districts to develop a mobile school-linked health center to meet the needs of students and families. I am especially hopeful about the pilot to implement a telehealth model with school nurses that are located in a different school. Collaborating with school nurses is integral to providing effective and timely care to students and we need to establish systems to better support those efforts. Our kids need all the support they can get and expanding school based health centers and strengthening school nurse support are key efforts with proven results.