

Memorandum

To: Chair Prusak, Vice-Chairs Salinas and Hayden and Members of the House Committee on Health Care

From: Marty Carty, Governmental Affairs Director, Oregon Primary Care Association
Courtney Kenney, Health Equity & Policy Manager, Oregon Primary Care Association

Date: March 25, 2021

Re: Support HB 2958-1

On behalf of the Oregon Primary Care Association (OPCA), we respectfully request your support for HB 2958-1.

OPCA is a non-profit organization, with a mission to support Oregon's 34 community health centers, also known as federally qualified health centers (FQHCs), in leading the transformation of primary care to achieve health equity for all. Community health centers deliver high-quality integrated medical, dental, and behavioral health services to **466,000—or one in 10—Oregonians**, many of whom otherwise would not be able to see a medical provider. Community health centers are providers within the CCO networks, providing care to some of Oregon's most vulnerable populations, including **one in four Oregon Health Plan members**.

Every Oregonian should have access to health care and specifically life-saving medication necessary to greatly reduce the risk of HIV infection for those individuals who are most at risk of exposure and infection. We know that increasing access to care is one of the single most effective ways to ensure that individuals receive the preventative and supportive health and medical care they need to thrive.

The 2021-2025 HIV National Strategic Plan is a roadmap for ending the HIV epidemic in the United States by 2030. Its objectives include, preventing new HIV infections; reducing HIV-related health inequities; and achieving integrated and coordinated efforts that address the HIV epidemic. Health inequity exists at every step along the continuum of HIV testing-to-care with gaps in each step contributing to and perpetuating inequity. HB 2958 prevents new infections and reduces health inequity by expanding access to these life-saving medications. In community health centers, clinical pharmacists are integrated as part of the care team yet they are not able to bill for services like testing, counseling, and prescribing. HB 2958 will ensure that all members of the patient's health care team are compensated for the care and services they provide.

Pharmacists are among some of the most accessible providers in communities across our state and are well positioned to improve patient understanding, promote medication adherence, provide key risk reduction counseling, and enhance PrEP and PEP efficacy. The pharmacy is a great entry point, especially for those patients who experience barriers to accessing health care.

Health centers provide essential integrated primary care and pharmacy services in their communities. In underserved areas across Oregon, we know that health center pharmacists reduce stigma associated with medications that promote harm reduction for patients suffering from substance use disorder and for those seeking family planning options. HB 2958 will improve access to PrEP and PEP and further reduce stigma, especially for minority patients and those in rural areas.

This bill is a critical first step toward ensuring all Oregonians have access to all health care services. OPCA and health centers recognize that a system that has "no wrong door" increases access to health care services and decreases health-related inequity. We hope that you will join us in support of HB 2958 with the -1 amendment.