



Memorandum

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

From: Danielle Sobel, Policy & Governmental Affairs Sr. Director, Oregon Primary Care Association
Marty Carty, Policy Senior Manager, Oregon Primary Care Association

Date: April 1, 2021

Re: Support HB 2010 with -1 amendment

On behalf of the Oregon Primary Care Association (OPCA), we respectfully request your support for HB 2010.

OPCA is a non-profit organization, with a mission to support Oregon's 33 community health centers, also known as federally qualified health centers, in leading the transformation of primary care to achieve health equity for all. Community health centers deliver 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**.

Health centers provide essential primary care services, and, are only part of the overall health system that Oregonian's need to access. We know that without coverage, many patients unfortunately delay accessing primary care and forgo specialty care altogether. Coverage allows these patients to access specialty care and inpatient services without fear of unaffordable costs. It also improves access to care in communities where there might not be a community health center, and provide families with more choices for providers, since not all providers work at a health center.

Integral to the state's overall safety net, health centers and their community health workers, understand firsthand the impact that the lack of insurance, or being uninsured, has on a family's ability to access needed care. Health centers see all patients, regardless of ability to pay, and, we know that a family is less likely to access care if they are uninsured or underinsured, when out of pocket costs are too high. Ensuring an affordable option for coverage on the marketplace as HB 2010 does, would mean that health center patients who don't qualify for the Oregon Health Plan or who are not eligible for marketplace subsidies, can access *all* the care they need, including specialty care. By covering more patients, health centers will be able to redeploy limited federal resources to reach deeper into rural and underserved communities to deliver more care for the remaining uninsured and underinsured in our state, including those who have historic issues with health care. **Nearly 41% of health center patients identify as a racial or ethnic minority.**

We see this an Oregon's next step in furthering access to health care and recognizes that having insurance not only promotes health and increases access to health-generating services but decreases health-related disparities, and **we respectfully urge you to vote yes on HB 2010 with the -1.**