



Good afternoon,

April 17, 2021

For the record, my name is Brenda Johnson. I serve as the CEO of La Clinica, a federally qualified migrant and community health center serving nearly 30,000 people each year in Jackson County.

La Clinica provides primary medical, dental, behavioral health, pharmacy and wellness services to our community's most vulnerable residents. To care for our community, we operate 25 service sites: six (6) neighborhood health centers, seventeen (17) school-based health centers, a 34-chair dental clinic, and a mobile health center.

My testimony is in support of a creative, community-driven project in partnership with the Rogue River School District and a request for resources to construct a health and wellbeing center that serves the students, families, and community members of Rogue River and Wimer.

We began conversations with the leaders of the Rogue River school district over 3 years ago. They had a vision that the children and families in their district would have easy access to healthcare and early childhood services and they wanted to give district land to make this possible. They conducted a community needs assessment and found that over 70% of residents had unmet primary care needs (state average at the time was 23%), and regrettably, that the community held the highest mortality rate in Southern Oregon.

They needed a healthcare partner and knew that we share their vision for a healthier community.

I've lived and led in Southern Oregon for more than two decades, and I've seen a lot. I've never seen a school district think so creatively, and so thoughtfully about how to balance the needs of all residents in their community as I witnessed when I met Rogue River district leadership. They need your help to make this vision a reality.

We are committed to providing the operational support needed to staff this health center and the district is deeply engaged in ensuring the model is supported as well. We need your help in resourcing the \$2.7 million needed for construction.

We recognize the many competing priorities in front of this legislative body. We know COVID-19 has impacted all of us, not the least of which are our more rural community members lacking access to care. We ask that you think about this as a one-time, permanent investment for a community that lacks easy access to the very healthcare resources that combat a pandemic and improve the lives of Oregonians.

This community is impressive, and the children and families of Rogue River need your support. Small communities work that way. They look out for one another and they care deeply about their people. Please invest in them. If I may be a resource for additional information, please don't hesitate to let me know.

Sincerely,

Brenda Johnson, RN, MBA
Chief Executive Officer

La Clinica

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