

Chair Fahey, Vice-Chairs Campos and Morgan, and Members of the House Housing Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of HB 2842 to create a Healthy Homes program.

My name is Dr. Ann Turner. As a primary care physician, I worked at Virginia Garcia Memorial Health Center, a migrant and community health center in Washington and Yamhill Counties. Now retired, I am a member of Oregon Physicians for Responsibility's Healthy Climate Action Team.

As health care providers, we know that among the social determinants of health, medical care is only a small part of what keeps us healthy. Social and environmental factors are **twice** as important. As we think about our environment, what could be more important than having a healthy home?

In my experience working with an underserved, low income, and largely minority population, I cared for many children and adults with asthma who reported living in drafty, moldy homes that they could not afford to heat adequately. Although I prescribed medications to **treat** their asthma, I knew that eliminating asthma triggers at home would be more effective and actually **prevent** their asthma attacks. The Healthy Homes program would make this possible.

The Healthy Homes program would have an almost immediate positive return on Investment by decreasing hospital and emergency department visits for asthma and related conditions. These costly and preventable visits would not only save money for Oregon Health Authority but improve the health and wellbeing of our most vulnerable residents.

Other health benefits include preventing radon-induced lung cancer, decreasing acute cardiovascular and respiratory events, including COVID-19, caused by poor indoor air quality, and decreasing heat-related emergency department visits.

Healthy homes are more energy efficient and cost less to heat and cool. Reducing utility bills is especially helpful to low income families, allowing them to afford essentials such as food and medication, and reducing their stress. Stress in itself may cause and definitely exacerbates existing physical and mental health problems.

This bill also supports Oregon's climate action plan by reducing energy use and greenhouse gas emissions overall and, therefore, the effects of climate change, affecting minority and low income populations disproportionately.

I urge you to pass HB 2842 to benefit the health of the most vulnerable of your constituents and create a healthier environment for all Oregonians.