

Chair Rachel Prusak  
25, 2021  
900 Court St. NE, H-489  
Salem, Oregon 97301  
House Health Care Committee

February

Re: Letter of support of HB 2359 the Health Care Interpretation Accountability Act

I am an Arabic Medical Interpreter who has a deep background in the Arabic language. I am fluent in at least ten Arabic dialects. I am writing in support of HB 2359 the Health Care Interpretation Accountability Act.

The entire service delivery network must be reviewed to understand what the language needs of Limited English Speakers are. If healthcare systems cannot provide bilingual providers that address these needs, they must address the gap by working with Traditional Health Workers and Certified and Qualified Health Care Interpreters.

The health care interpreter (HCI) is an essential part of the medical team. Interpreters offer a language and cultural bridge between a healthcare professional (like a doctor, nurse, dentist, etc.), and a limited English proficient (LEP) patient. This ensures the proper communication that allows for the LEP patient to receive quality medical care.

Volumes of research support that addressing Cultural and Linguistic needs of individuals meets the Triple Aim. Until the providers speak or sign the language of individuals is adequate for community needs, Interpreters bridge that gap.

The COVID-19 pandemic has drastically impacted the Spoken and Signed Language Health Care Interpreter workforce. Many Healthcare Interpreters were laid off immediately, those that invested to transition to remote work were, unutilized by health systems that shifted to cheaper, lower quality Interpreter Agencies that do not employ Oregon Certified and Qualified Interpreters.

Arabic is my native language which I have been utilizing for interpreting as a Qualified Interpreter for Oregon and have been in this field since 2015. The majority of my work has gone remote since Covid hit many of us interpreters hard. I was barely having in person appointments for the first two months, March and April, and then transitioned to primarily remote Arabic interpreting work after that. Having higher priority as an interpreter would not only benefit myself but also the clients and healthcare providers as I offer a strong background in interpreting due to many dedicated hours of my time to training and professional development.

HB 2359 the Health Care Interpretation Accountability Act, moves Oregon in the direction of Recognizing, Rectifying, and Reconciling historical and contemporary injustices for the Limited English Speaking population.

Respectfully,  
Alexander Myers

Qualified Arabic Medical Interpreter









