



*A driving force for health equity*

*Submitted via electronic mail*

January 26, 2022

The Honorable Pam Marsh  
Oregon House of Representatives  
900 Court St. NE, H-474  
Salem, Oregon 97301

*Re: Support for HB 4092, Broadband Governance, Availability and Equity*

Dear Representative Marsh,

On behalf of OCHIN, I appreciate the opportunity to offer support for HB 4092, which amends membership qualifications to the Oregon Broadband Advisory Council and establishes a broadband investment framework. Broadband access is essential to promoting health equity, while also addressing social determinants of health that can create structural inequality and poor health outcomes, such as limited use of telehealth.

OCHIN is an Oregon based [national health research network](#) and continuous learning health system collaborative that offers technology solutions, informatics, evidence-based research, and policy insights. OCHIN network members in Oregon provide care to more than 580,000 patients and had more than 2.3 million visits in 2021. For over two decades, OCHIN has advanced equitable health care solutions by leveraging the strength of our network's unique data set and the practical experience of our members to drive technology innovation at scale for patients and providers in underserved communities.

In order to bridge the digital divide faced by historically underserved populations across Oregon, internet connectivity must be given top priority. During COVID-19, it became apparent how many communities lack broadband connectivity to their homes, or the necessary broadband speed and capacity to support a household reliance on access to the internet. Telehealth provides underserved patients one method to overcome structural inequality, but the lack of accessible, affordable, and reliable broadband has only magnified these inequities. To meet the needs of households for the remainder of the pandemic and to ensure continued equal access to the opportunities afforded by strong and reliable internet access, infrastructure must be expanded. Broadband development programs must ensure internet access is affordable, and capacity must be increased to meet the needs of all, particularly those in historically underserved communities. HB 4092 is a critical step in overcoming existing obstacles to care and closing the digital divide.

Internet connectivity has become as necessary to modern life as electricity, expanding broadband access to all Oregonians is necessary to end structural health inequalities. Please contact me at [stollj@ochin.org](mailto:stollj@ochin.org) to discuss how we can help expand access to broadband for all Oregonians.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jennifer Stoll".

Jennifer Stoll  
Executive Vice President  
External Affairs