



February 7, 2022

Submitted electronically to the House Committee on Health Care

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Chair Prusak, Vice-Chairs Hayden & Salinas, and committee members:

I am writing on behalf of Cascade AIDS Project & Prism Health to ask you to please **support House Bill 4035**, which will enable Oregon to maintain its momentum toward offering a public insurance option.

As the oldest and largest provider of HIV & LGBTQ+ health services in Oregon, Cascade AIDS Project & Prism Health serve many people living in our state for whom health insurance is inaccessible, unaffordable, or not adequate to meet their healthcare needs. **The high cost of healthcare is a driver of HIV transmission and poor HIV health outcomes.** It is also a significant factor in LGBTQ+ health disparities: For example, Oregon lesbians, gays, and bisexuals are more likely to report recently not being able to access healthcare due to cost.

A "public option" has the potential to push down healthcare costs and make care more accessible for marginalized communities. **The public-option implementation plan commissioned by the Legislature last year calls for Oregon to transition to a state-based marketplace** so that we have the flexibility we need to launch a public option custom-made for Oregonians by 2025. We encourage you to follow that plan by approving HB 4035, continuing our state's progress toward a more affordable and equitable healthcare system.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Frochtz wajg
Public Policy & Grants Manager, Cascade AIDS Project & Prism Health

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