



COMUNIDAD Y HERENCIA CULTURAL



Written testimony: SB 564, 2023

Chair Patterson and Vice-Chair Hayden,

My name is Jose Antonio Huerta and I am writing this letter in support of SB 564, a bill that will offer support for Regional Health Equity Coalitions (RHECs) to enter into the second phase of expansion. This expansion is working toward statewide representation to develop RHEC capacity to support health equity efforts across Oregon.

Regional Health Equity Coalitions (RHECs) are autonomous, community-driven, cross-sector groups. The RHEC model works by building on the inherent strengths of local communities to meaningfully involve them in identifying sustainable, long-term, policy, system and environmental solutions to increase health equity for communities of color, and those living at the intersection of race/ethnicity and other marginalized identities.

Community driven solutions are important because they provide key information by the actual communities most affected by health inequities to inform and guide the work of the RHECs.

The RHEC model was designed intentionally to ensure that communities most impacted by health inequities were at the forefront of policy, systems and environment change work that impact their communities. These communities include; Oregon's nine federally recognized Tribes, immigrants, refugees, migrant and seasonal farmworkers, low-income populations, persons with disabilities and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning communities in rural and urban areas, with communities of color as the leading priority.

In response to the pandemic, we have been offering activities to address physical and mental health challenges affecting our Spanish speaking families. With the creation of the Lane and Douglas Counties RHEC, we are starting the conversation to build a more robust coalition to address health equity in a more cohesive manner at the county level.

We support the model of RHECs that includes uplifting and centering the impact of structural, institutional, and interpersonal racism on the health and well-being of communities of color.

We support this bill because we need to sustain this work in the long term so ALL members of our historically marginalized communities can live to their full potential.

Sincerely,

Jose Antonio Huerta
Founder and Director
Comunidad y Herencia Cultural