



Memorandum

To: Chair Dexter, Co-Chair Gamba, Co-Chair Helfrich, and Members of the House Committee on Housing and Homelessness

From: Marty Carty, Director of Government Affairs

Date: February 23, 2023

Re: HB 2001

The Oregon Primary Care Association (OPCA) is a non-profit organization, with a mission to support Oregon's 34 Community Health Centers (CHCs), also known as Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs), in leading the transformation of primary care to achieve health equity for all. Health centers deliver integrated primary, behavioral, mental, and oral health care services to over **436,000 Oregonians**. 41% of [health center patients](#) identify as a racial or ethnic minority, 18% are uninsured, and 3% are veterans. FQHCs provide care to some of Oregon's most vulnerable populations, including **one in four Oregon Health Plan (OHP) members**. They care for all patients, regardless of insurance type, ability to pay, and citizenship. FQHCs operate more than 270 care delivery sites in Oregon's communities where their patients live and work – urban, rural, and frontier -- ensuring consistent access to treatment with trusted professionals.

We encourage your support for House Bill 2001, which addresses the urgent housing needs we are experiencing in our state and mitigates barriers to accessing and maintaining adequate and stable housing. Our Community Health Centers provide holistic, individualized care to every patient, including the 14% who are experiencing homelessness. OPCA believes that housing is health care and ameliorating upstream factors which impede housing stability will lead [to gains across all health indicators](#). Access to stable housing reduces use of emergency departments, incidences of chronic stress and behavioral health diagnoses, and improves overall health outcomes – it is a step towards creating an Oregon where all people can achieve their highest well-being.

HB 2001, incorporating the amendments being considered by your committee on February 23, includes several important elements of the response to our statewide housing crisis. The bill will:

- Provide essential and reasonable negotiated improvements to Oregon's eviction statutes to promote stability and payment rather than displacement and eviction.
- Expand investments in youth homelessness prevention, prioritizing services for school-aged children who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, and their families.
- Provide \$20 million in grant/loan funds for the construction of low-cost modular housing in wildfire-affected areas and for low- and moderate-income households.
- Provide \$3 million in seed financing for construction of affordable workforce rental housing.
- Address our long-term housing production challenges by establishing enforceable standards for local jurisdictions to promote the production of abundant, equitable, affordable and diverse housing options.

These are practical solutions to our current housing crisis and we are grateful for your time and action.