

Submitter: Olivia Danforth

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

Measure: HB2002

Date: March 21, 2023

To: House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care

From: Olivia M. Danforth, MD

Family Physician, Samaritan Health Services

Member, Oregon Medical Association Board of Trustees

RE: Support HB 2002

Chair Nosse, Vice-Chairs Goodwin and Nelson, Members of the Committee:

I am writing to express support for House Bill 2002, Reproductive Health and Access to Care. I am a family medicine physician with specialization in gender affirming care.

While Oregon established a strong legislative commitment to health equality for transgender people in 2016, arbitrary coverage exclusion remains a frequent and burdensome obstacle in my patients' lives. California, Hawaii, Washington, Maryland other states have undergone a similar cycle where health coverage protections intended to be comprehensive ultimately required follow up legislation similar to HB2002. Ensuring coverage of the full standard care has been shown to have negligible cost impact in such cases.

Studies have repeatedly established gender-affirming care as cost-effective and often lifesaving. A range of services needed by patients are understood to be medically necessary under consensus guidelines and are recommended by their clinicians but continue to be denied as cosmetic or non-covered by insurance plans. This most impacts patients who are unable to afford out of pocket costs and lack the time or ability to engage in protracted appeals and grievances. As a result, the mental and personal health benefits associated with gender affirming care are not equally accessible for many of my patients. HB2002 would change that for them.

This legislation has also been introduced at a time where the ability of transgender people to depend on medical care or even basic human rights is under attack all around the country. The aggressive pace, extremity, and consequence of the broader movement to criminalize sexual health and reproduction is of great personal and professional concern. Oregon has stood apart from other states as a place that values individual freedom and patient bodily autonomy. Above all else, HB2002 will enhance Oregonians' liberty to thrive as ourselves.

For these reasons and more, I hope you will vote in support of House Bill 2002.
Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Olivia M. Danforth, MD
Family Physician, Samaritan Health Services
Member, Oregon Medical Association Board of Trustees