



March 21, 2023

Dear Honorable Members:

Iokwe or Hello. My name is Meilly Lakjohn, an Advisor and Community Member submitting this written testimony on behalf of the nonprofit called MANIT, which means "culture" in Marshallese. The organization's full name is Marshallese American Network for Interacting Together. MANIT's mission statement is "To celebrate the identity of the Marshallese people through community building, advocacy, and education." MANIT is part of the Community Health Equity Coalition, comprised of more than 80 community-base-organizations (CBOs) that collectively respond to the public health needs of Oregonians.

Our organization has held many successful community events with the support of Oregon Health Authority programs. MANIT was the first to provide the Moderna Booster to the Marshallese and islander populations at the MANIT COVID-19 Community Clinic in Tigard, Oregon, on October 23, 2021. MANIT was one of the first organizations to have it available to children aged 5 to 12 at a COVID-19 Community Clinic in La Grande, Oregon, on November 13, 2021. MANIT was able to work with a Marshallese group that was part of an outbreak and hesitant to get vaccinated, but after an influential member got his first dose, other members of the group got vaccinated.

We are grateful for all the incredible work the Oregon Health Authority and the team of talented individuals have carried out over the years to get us where we are today. OHA helped implement programs for CBOs to provide the necessary services to the people of Oregon during a global crisis. We thank the Governor's Office for being thoughtful in her proposed budget to include funding and additional funding for the people of Oregon.

MANIT appreciates the legislature's commitment to health equity and requests that OHA's Public Health Modernization POP is fully funded for the CBOs to continue leveraging existing relationships to ensure every Oregonian have the flexible community-based supports they need to lead happy and healthy lives.

Thank you, Honorable Members.