



PROJECT ACCESS NOW

April 20th, 2023

Chair Lieber, Vice Chair Knopp, and Members of the Senate Committee on Rules,

I'm writing to you today representing the 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization Project Access NOW. As a community-based organization providing access to health care and health-related resources for un- and under- insured communities, Project Access NOW has a unique understanding of the dire state of our current healthcare system and just how desperately the people of Oregon need universal coverage. Last year we provided \$4,594,998 in donated healthcare resources to the uninsured and paid the premiums for 685 individuals who don't qualify for Medicaid but still can't afford coverage. **We strongly believe that establishing a permanent Universal Healthcare Plan Governance Board as detailed in SB 1089 is the next critical step on the path to creating an equitable healthcare system without the gaps in coverage and access we currently see today.**

Project Access NOW exists specifically to fill gaps in coverage and access, a testament to the need for new solutions to healthcare challenges. Oregon's current piecemeal solution creates massive inefficiencies and leaves many of the most marginalized Oregonians behind. Through Project Access NOW's five programs, things like assistance with premium costs for individuals purchasing plans on the Marketplace, access to donated care for uninsured individuals who aren't eligible for Medicaid or a Marketplace plan, and access to health-related services like housing assistance and transportation are all provided to individuals and families who ultimately have fallen through the cracks of our current system. **We have a vision for a future Oregon where there are no cracks in the system, and all individuals in Oregon can have their health needs met equitably and efficiently in a centralized capacity.**

We believe SB1089 is the next step towards that vision. A governance board to guide this work in creating a Universal Health Plan will be invaluable, as there are infinite moving pieces to a strong single-payer healthcare system and the nuts and bolts to such a system will inevitably be vastly complex and require the guidance of such an entity. As details like plan benefits, provider networks, consumer cost-sharing, eligibility requirements, and enrollment platforms are all ironed out over the course of this process, a governance board will both act as the critical convener of public engagement on these issues as well as the stabilizing, neutral support to these efforts that will lead to their success. **We encourage you to move this bill forward to ensure that this essential legislation is a success for all Oregonians.**

Please don't hesitate to reach out if we can answer any questions.

Carly Hood-Ronick MPA, MPH

Chief Executive Officer
Project Access NOW

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