



Memorandum

To: Co-Chair Steiner, Co-Chair Sanchez and Members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means

From: Siskiyou Community Health Center

Date: April 21, 2023

Re: Support for Health Equity Investments: The Basic Health Plan and HB 2002, Section 29 FQHC Reproductive Health Pilot

On behalf of Siskiyou Community Health Center (SCHC), we are writing to voice our strong support of full funding for the Basic Health Plan and Section 29 of House Bill 2002, which establishes a Federally Qualified Health Center Reproductive Health Pilot Program. These are opportunities to implement upstream programs that can improve health and social outcomes for Oregonians and decrease healthcare costs in our state.

Of Siskiyou Community Health Center's 18,901 patients served in 2022, 9,642 were at or below 200% of the federal poverty level. While FQHCs provide care to all people, regardless of insurance status, citizenship, or ability to pay, access to robust and affordable health benefits increases the likelihood that people will seek out and access care. Without access to the Basic Health Plan, many of these patients are at risk of becoming uninsured as the Public Health Emergency comes to an end and the Medicare redetermination process takes place. While SCHC will continue to provide the same level of care to those patients impacted by loss of insurance coverage, we will have fewer resources available for services due to the reduction in revenue expected to occur when shifting those patients to the sliding fee scale. We encourage the Committee to consider how the Basic Health Plan would not only expand Oregonian's access to health care, but also mitigate the financial stress that Oregon FQHCs could experience without the necessary resources to support the 55,000 patients statewide estimated to become uninsured.

Siskiyou Community Health Care patients depend on us to provide them with access to holistic health care, including reproductive health care. While we can provide many reproductive health care services, we are restricted from providing abortion care because of our federally funded status. Meanwhile, in Oregon, there is a scarcity of abortion care access, with 78% of Oregon counties lacking access to comprehensive reproductive health services. Community Health Centers are providers within the Coordinated Care Organization (CCO) networks providing care to Oregon's underserved populations, including one in four Oregon Health Plan members. With 33 FQHC sites in 36 of Oregon's counties already providing critical health care access to underserved Oregonians, it makes sense to expand health centers' ability to provide complete reproductive care through House Bill 2002, Section 29. We support this bill and urge the Committee to fully fund the pilot so that our rural and frontier partners can



expand services, providing truly equitable access to reproductive health care in the communities where their patients live and work.

Siskiyou Community Health Center remains the only Tier 4 Primary Care Medical Home in Josephine County and is the sole source of safety-net primary health care services offering sliding fee discounts to the community. During the COVID-19 pandemic, SCHC was able to pivot our operations to respond to the crisis by offering COVID-19 testing, a drive-thru COVID-19 vaccine clinic, same day medical appointments and virtual visits, and provide access to antiviral treatments as a Test-to-Treat program facility. Throughout the pandemic, Siskiyou worked to ensure that underserved and at-risk patient populations continued to receive critical health care services during the unprecedented National Health Emergency.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of these health equity investments. We believe that fully funding the Basic Health Plan and Section 29 of House Bill 2002 will positively impact Oregonians, specifically those we serve in our communities. We urge the committee to include both in the final budget for the 2023 Legislative Session.

Respectfully,

Siskiyou Community Health Center

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard Booth". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Richard Booth, MHA
Chief Executive Officer