

To: Senate Committee on Health Care
From: Tim Page, Oregon Interpreters in Action
Re: Support for Statewide Health Care Interpreter Portal

Dear Chair Patterson, Vice-Chair Hayden, and members of the Committee,

My name is Tim Page and I began interpreting in Spanish in 2013 as a volunteer for Southwest Community Health Center (no longer operating) to help the Latino community.

I became a health care interpreter because even when patients are native English speakers, miscommunication happens. Imagine how difficult it is for people who have limited proficiency. Patients don't receive the proper care when they aren't understood.

I no longer do interpreting because of the low pay. It just wasn't worth the time to take one hour jobs, travel from site to site without compensation for my time, pay for gasoline and maintenance and end up feeling like my skills weren't worth much.

I think a lot of potential interpreters are shut out by the national exams. Becoming a certified interpreter is important because much of interpreting depends on more than just the words spoken. Communication is a whole body exercise.

I'm not sure what a state-based scheduling and payment system would look like, but I know that interpreters need to make more money in order to keep doing this work.