

To: Senate Committee on Health Care
From: Sabrina Ahmed, 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 Sabrina Ahmed. I have been interpreting in Somali and Swahili since I came to America 15 years ago. I went into health care interpreting because most of my family and community has a really hard time finding an interpreter when they go to healthcare appointments. Doing this job feels amazing because I know I am supporting my community and making a positive impact.

When people have a qualified health care interpreter with them, they understand what is going on with their health, and it gives them peace of mind. It also helps medical providers understand the patients' problems. I have worked with a client who had a previous interpreter who spoke a different dialect, and when I joined her at her next appointment, she was happy to be understood and said that I explained the situation so much better.

I want to keep doing this work because it really makes a difference in people's lives, but I can't make enough money. I need more appointment opportunities and better pay. I would also like to have a breakdown of how much I am being paid, because language companies don't give me that.

If there was a way that we could make the process easier to set up appointments with doctors directly, and get paid, it would make doing this job so much better.