

Submitter: Elizabeth Uno
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1570
Elizabeth Uno

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RE: Testimony in Support of SB 1570-1

To the Senate Health Care Committee:

I am urging you to support SB1570-1 to protect and codify access to healthcare and essential civil rights for Oregonians. I've worked as a primary care physician in Oregon since 2014 and have seen first hand how immigration status affects both access and quality of healthcare. Early in my career, a woman came to my office with a badly broken leg- the bones fractured at an unnatural angle after she had slipped on the ice. She had been confined to bed and in severe pain but waited a week to seek medical care due to concerns about immigration status. She heard that our community clinic was a safe space for immigrants and finally arrived with a friend. I sent her to the hospital for emergency treatment and it was another month before she finally had surgery as her fears about interacting with the healthcare system continued to delay her care.

Stories like hers are becoming more and more common as even our clinics are no longer safe spaces for our patients. With the removal of federally designated sensitive spaces and the increasingly aggressive tactics of federal agents, citizens and non-citizens alike are afraid to come to the doctor. At a time of mounting public health crises my clinic staff are running drills on how to interact with federal agents and keep our patients and their protected health information safe instead of focusing on how to treat and prevent disease. I find myself doing more and more social work and less medicine- helping patients find rides to the clinic when they're afraid to take public transportation, educating them on legal resources and trying to reassure them that our clinic is still a place of safety. SB 1570 is an opportunity to help make Oregon a state where all people receive healthcare without fear. It also creates much-needed standards for hospitals to maintain patient privacy.

Please stand with Oregonians and healthcare workers to help create a more equitable system that focuses on health and safety, not fear.

Thank you for considering this testimony and I look forward to your support.

Elizabeth Uno, MD