

Submitter: Jennifer McCall
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Rules
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1570

Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Dr. Jennifer McCall. I am a pediatrician practicing in Oregon and an assistant professor of pediatrics. I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 1570 (A-Engrossed).

At its core, health care depends on trust. Patients must feel safe sharing sensitive information and seeking care without fear that their personal details will be used for purposes unrelated to their medical needs. When patients fear that accessing care could expose them or their family members to immigration enforcement, they delay preventive services, avoid urgent care, and disengage from the health system altogether. That fear undermines both individual and public health.

SB 1570 reinforces clear and appropriate boundaries within health care settings.

First, the bill appropriately limits disclosure of individually identifiable health information and information concerning a person's citizenship or immigration status for law enforcement purposes, unless disclosure is required by law, court order, or necessary for continuity of care. This aligns with long-standing medical ethics and confidentiality standards. Hospitals are places of healing, not extensions of immigration enforcement.

Second, requiring hospitals to designate areas not open to the public provides clarity for staff, patients, and visitors. Clear policies regarding access protect patient privacy and help prevent confusion or confrontation in sensitive clinical environments.

Third, the bill protects health care employees from retaliation for distributing state-published informational materials about immigration rights and available legal services. Health care workers are often trusted messengers in their communities. Ensuring they can share accurate, publicly available information without fear of disciplinary action strengthens, rather than undermines, patient well-being.

Finally, requiring hospitals and federally qualified health centers to treat information about citizenship, immigration status, and country of birth in the same manner as protected health information ensures consistency and reinforces patient confidence. Patients should not have to wonder whether certain parts of their identity are treated differently from other confidential medical information.

This legislation does not prevent compliance with valid court orders or applicable law. Instead, it clarifies expectations, strengthens privacy protections, and affirms that health care facilities exist to provide care first and foremost.

As a pediatrician, I care for children whose health outcomes depend on their families' willingness to seek care early and consistently. Policies that foster fear in clinical spaces directly harm children. SB 1570 helps preserve the trust that is essential to delivering safe, effective, and equitable care.

I respectfully urge your support of Senate Bill 1570.

Thank you for your time and for your commitment to the health and well-being of all Oregonians.

Sincerely,
Jennifer McCall, DO FAAP