



March 15, 2017

Chair Greenlick, Co-Chairs and Members of the House Health Care Committee,

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Network for Reproductive Options (NRO), an Oregon-based abortion fund, we request your support for the Reproductive Health Equity Act (HB 3391). We believe that people are the experts on their own lives, and we work to support people's choices about what is best for themselves, their families and their communities. The lowest cost of an abortion in Oregon is over \$500, and the cost can go as high as \$4,000. Having to come up with that kind of money, due at the time of service, when time is of the essence, is hard for some people and impossible for most. In 2016, NRO received almost 400 calls from people looking for financial assistance for an abortion, and we funded about one third of those callers. We frequently talk to people that have insurance plans with high deductibles, high cost-sharing, or no abortion coverage, meaning that they essentially need to pay for their procedure out of pocket.

A few weeks ago, a woman who we'll call Beatriz called our hotline. She is in her 40's, has two children, and lives in Marion County. Her older child is 16 and her youngest is 8. Beatriz experienced some trauma during her most recent birth experience, resulting in her child having a developmental disability, and she was told she would never be able to get pregnant again. When she found out she was pregnant, she thought for a week about her options—whether she could emotionally go through another pregnancy and delivery given her past experience, and what it would mean to bring another child into her family at this time. She decided the best thing for herself and her family would be to have an abortion. This decision would leave her with the capacity to care for her current children in the way that made sense for her, and would also make her feel safe in her body.

When she called a clinic to make an appointment, she found out that her OHP CAWEM would not cover the cost of the abortion, and the cost would be \$1,500. Beatriz works when she can, but her full time job is to care for her youngest child. Her husband works, making about \$1,200 a month. Given that there was no option for a payment plan and she has no access to a credit card due to her immigration status, an abortion seemed financially out of reach for her. She called the NRO, and we worked with her to come up with enough funding so she could be seen. Beatriz's story is not unique. We are often the difference between someone like Beatriz being able to make a choice about her future or having to miss their appointment because they cannot pay.

NRO strongly supports the Reproductive Health Equity Act. Access to pre-conception care, contraception, prenatal care, abortion and postpartum care at no cost out of pocket would make a huge difference in the lives of the people who call us. Passing the Reproductive Health Equity Act would mean so many people being able to make decisions about their families and their bodies based on what's right for them, and not based on the cost burden of medical care. We know people continue with unwanted pregnancies because they hang up the phone right after a clinic tells them the cost of an abortion. We want everyone in Oregon to be able to plan their families without worrying about meeting a deductible. We hope you will join us in support of the Reproductive Health Equity Act (HB 3391).

Sincerely,

Katherine McGuiness, Board President, on behalf of the Board of Directors of the Network for Reproductive Options