

## Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Capital Construction

Attention: Co-Chair Girod, Co-Chair Holvey, and Members of the Committee;

As members of the Health Equity Circle (HEC), an interdisciplinary student group of community organizers at Oregon Health and Science University, we are writing to support HB 5005 and Governor Brown's request for \$50 million in Article XI-Q General Obligation bonds to build permanent supportive housing across Oregon.

Housing is a critical vehicle to optimal health. Making medical appointments, choosing healthy options at the grocery store, and refilling medications often fall by the wayside when one struggles to pay rent or find stable housing. Research demonstrates that permanent supportive housing works. In fact, a study in Oregon showed improved health outcomes among residents of supportive housing including a 20% increase in primary care utilization, an 18% decrease in emergency department use, and a 12% decrease in Medicaid expenditures (Wright, Li, Vartanian, & Weller, 2016).

As future health care providers, we have personally worked with individuals struggling to get back on their feet after a hospital admission or achieve stability with their chronic health condition because they cannot find housing. We have worked with the most vulnerable individuals in Portland and in rural Oregon communities like Klamath Falls. We know that additional funding for permanent supportive housing is exactly what our communities need. We cannot accept the status quo because our role as healthcare providers transcends the bedside. We are united with housing advocates in support of increased housing funding to improve community health outcomes.

We ask that you support the Governor's request for \$50 million to develop new permanent supportive housing across the state. We know how much it means to have a safe, stable, and affordable place to call home. Thank you for your attention to this matter and for the service you provide to the state of Oregon.

With respect,

Ali Kanat, Nurse-Midwifery Student, Class of 2019

Ian Coe, Medical Student, Class of 2019

Oregon Health & Science University

## References

Wright B, Li G, Vartanian K, & Weller M. (2016) *Health in Housing: Exploring the Intersection Between Housing and Health Care*. The Center for Outcomes Research and Education.