



**Testimony in support of HJR 202**  
***Health Care Access for All Oregonians***

February 4, 2020

Dear Chair Salinas and Members of the House Committee on Health Care,

On behalf of the Association of Oregon Community Mental Health Programs (AOCMHP), representing the 32 community mental health program directors across the state, I am writing to express support for HJR 202, which would ensure every Oregonian has access to cost-effective, clinically appropriate and affordable health care.

As managers of the behavioral health safety net and providers of a wide array of behavioral health services and supports for their community members, community mental health programs must often use state and county general funds to provide services for people who are un- or under-insured. These funds are finite and CMHPs are forced to prioritize people with acute and crisis-level needs and by income. We have experienced that Medicaid is the best payer of behavioral health services, both in service array and in provider type, and AOCMHP supported a Medicaid buy in option as a bridge to this concept last year.

As a director of a not-for-profit association, I also support HJR 202 from the point of view of a small business with a very small group insurance policy, but very large premiums and high deductibles. Health benefits are a huge expense for small businesses such as ours and the idea that health coverage would not be tied to employers is quite compelling.

Please support HJR 202 to ensure all Oregonians have equitable access to health care.

Sincerely,

*Cherryl L. Ramirez*

Cherryl L. Ramirez  
Director, AOCMHP