

OREGON HOSPITALS SUPPORT ACCESS TO CARE

Oregon's hospitals and health systems work every day to provide care for those who need it and ensure patients have access to programs that provide critical services. The Department of Homeland Security's **public charge rule threatens this mission** by discouraging legal immigrants who are seeking a pathway to citizenship from enrolling in medical assistance, nutrition aid or housing supports that address the social determinants of health.

Connecting people to comprehensive health care coverage, such as Medicaid, is a driving goal. We want to ensure that nothing in HB 4029 will preclude a hospital from educating patients about the benefits of Medicaid or assisting people in applying should they choose to do so. However, hospitals recognize and understand the risk of enrolling in Medicaid for individuals and families seeking permanent residence status, as it could jeopardize their citizenship. **We support the intent of HB 4029** to ensure patients and families have access to health care services when they need them.

Hospital financial assistance is not intended to replace government or commercial coverage. We will **monitor this effort for any unintended consequences** – such as seeing an increase in the number of people who are not impacted by public charge who are choosing not to enroll in Medicaid and relying on financial assistance as a primary source of coverage.

