

2/4/2020

Dear Chair Salinas and House Committee on Health Care;

We are writing this letter in support of HB 4161, a bill that will offer support for Regional Health Equity Coalitions (RHECs) to grow and develop their capacity to support statewide health equity efforts.

Regional Health Equity Coalitions (RHECs) are autonomous, community-driven, cross-sector groups. The RHEC model works by building on the **inherent strengths of local communities** to meaningfully involve them in identifying sustainable, long-term, policy, system and environmental solutions to increase health equity for communities of color, and those living at the intersection of race/ethnicity and other marginalized identities.

Health Share is dedicated to high quality, culturally responsive service delivery that enables communities to thrive and acknowledge that a majority of what keeps individuals and communities healthy happens outside of a clinical setting. The members we serve disproportionately experience marginalization, oppression, and often generational socioeconomic barriers. RHECs are appropriately positioned to enable CCOs a closer connection with communities and further enable the development of meaningful strategies to ensure our work aligns with community need.

The importance of codifying the definition of RHECs is central to this bill. The model of RHECs was designed intentionally to ensure that communities most impacted by health inequities were at the forefront of policy, systems and environment change work that impact their communities. These communities include; Oregon's nine federally recognized Indian tribes, immigrants, refugees, migrant and seasonal farmworkers, low-income populations, persons with disabilities and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning communities in rural and urban areas, with communities of color as the leading priority.

We support the model of RHECs that includes uplifting and centering the impact of structural, institutional, and interpersonal racism on the health and well-being of communities of color. The model also prioritizes meaningful engagement of communities most impacted to lead efforts; and honors community wisdom by ensuring policy and system change solutions build upon community strengths.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jennine Smart, MSW". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Jennine Smart, MSW
Equity & Inclusion Program Manager
Health Share of Oregon