

Racial Justice Council- Health Equity Committee

March 2, 2021

Oregon State Legislature
Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Services
900 Court St. NE Salem, OR 97301

Re: House Bill 5024 – Oregon Health Authority Budget

Co-Chairs Lieber and Nosse, and members of the Subcommittee on Human Services:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on the Oregon Health Authority Budget, HB 5024. As co-chairs of the Racial Justice Council (RJC)- Health Equity Committee we share our support on the RJC Health Equity budgetary priorities in HB 5024. As leaders in the public sector, business community and non-profit sector we come into this work by centering, Tribal, Black, Indigenous and People of Color. The urgency could not be greater in this moment to channel and follow the voices of people most impacted by historical and institutional racism in Oregon and create a system with them that fully supports us all.

Over the last year we have come together to support the principle that all Oregonians must have quality, affordable health care, regardless of who they are or where they live. Our committee supports **maintaining coverage fully for the Oregon Health Plan**, as a foundational starting point of reducing health disparities. Additionally, we have put forward budgetary priorities that make targeted investments to address health inequities in Oregon. Our priorities include:

- Public Health Modernization, invest in core public health capacity for community-based organizations, local public health authorities, and tribal governments to help modernize the state's public health system, \$30M.
- Cover All People, a pilot program to provide state-based coverage to undocumented adults, DACA recipients, legal residents, and young adults who age out of Cover All Kids, \$10M.
- Compact of Free Association (COFA) premium assistance program and dental coverage for COFA residents, \$2.6M.
- Fund high-quality reproductive health services for the Oregon Health Plan (OHP), \$2M.
- Improve access to the Oregon Health Plan (OHP) by funding the Community Partners & Outreach Program to provide health services navigation, and improve language access and quality, \$7.8M.
- Funding to support traditional health worker licensing program, \$600,000
- Support Oregon Regional Health Equity Coalitions, \$5.8M
- Fund the Indian Managed Care Entity (IMCE) to provide critical care and coordination of services to tribal members on OHP, \$1.4M.

- Creates a new Tribal Traditional Health Worker Program category for Indian healthcare providers that supports tribal-based practices, \$200,000.
- Increases Medicaid funding to support tribal-based practices and strengthen pathways for tribal behavioral health workforce, \$500,000.
- Fund data collection for Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) and a statewide trauma-informed training program that provides technical assistance and support to providers. And continued implementation of race, ethnicity, language, disability data (REALD) and community-validated and community-driven data collection, \$5M.
- Workforce diversification, Oregon needs better pathways to diversify Oregon's behavioral health and medical workforces so that they better reflect the communities they are serving. We support seed funding for increased scholarships, tuition reimbursement, enhanced reimbursement rates for culturally-specific services; and establishing culturally-specific internships and clinical placements, \$27.5M.
- Substance Use Disorder 1115 Waiver, invest in substance use disorder treatment services, crisis intervention services and peer support services to help Oregonians recover from the disease of substance use disorders, \$11.5M.
- Community Behavioral Health Services, expand residential services for young adults, \$5M; fund peer run respite care centers, \$2.4M; increase fee-for-service rates for behavioral health services including for treatment of co-occurring behavioral health and substance use disorders, \$10.1M; invest in psychiatric residential treatment facilities, \$7.5M; and support the Alcohol and Drug Policy Commission's strategic plan, \$200,000; invest in community-based services and care coordination designed to reduce the influx of people from the criminal justice system into the Oregon State Hospital (Aid and Assist), \$19.3M.

We recognize that this list is expansive however it is a reflection of critical investments in health equity that cannot wait. For these reasons, we urge you to support HB 5024 and prioritize funding for the items listed above.

On behalf of the Racial Justice Council Health Equity Committee, thank you for your time and your commitment to Oregonians during this challenging time. We look forward to working with you as you develop our state's budget during this legislative session.

Sincerely,

Annie Valtierra- Sanchez, Co-Chair of the Racial Justice Council- Health Equity Committee
Executive Director, Southern Oregon Regional Health Equity Coalition

Jackie Mercer, Co Chair of the Racial Justice Council- Health Equity Committee
CEO, Native American Rehabilitation Association (NARA)