



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor



Oregon Department of Human Services

Office of the Director

500 Summer St. NE, E-15

Salem, OR 97301

Voice: 503-945-5600

Fax: 503-581-6198

March 3, 2021

Senator Jeff Golden, Co-Chair
Representative Greg Smith, Co-Chair
Members of the Joint Ways and Means, Subcommittee on General Government

From: Director Fariborz Pakseresht, ODHS

Re: Letter of Support for the Oregon Advocacy Commissions Office

Our work at the Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) is driven by our desire to assist all Oregonians in achieving their full potential. We focus on helping Oregonians develop well-being so they can live in safety, in good health and as independently as possible. We do not do this work alone and the Oregon Advocacy Commissions Office (OACO) is a partner we depend on to meet the needs of Oregonians. We believe collaborating with the OACO and the Advocacy Commissions have made public policy better and more equitable for the people our organizations serve.

ODHS has renewed and deepened its commitment to becoming an equitable organization and is actively combating the disparities shown in our data that reflect systemic racism, historic injustice, and inequitable distribution of power and resources in Oregon communities. Our priorities for the 2021-23 biennium include improving access to programs and services for historically underserved populations who have been most significantly impacted by the pandemic, including communities of color and tribes, and Oregonians with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

A recent example of a collaboration with OACO that supports our equity improvement efforts is the [Crisis de Nuestro Bienestar](#) report on Latino/a/x mental health in Oregon. We joined OACO, the Oregon Commission on Hispanic Affairs, and the Oregon Health Authority to develop and release this critical study and recommendations for increasing access and inclusion in Oregon's mental health system. With the excellent information in this report, we can now focus on evidence-based best practices grounded in culturally appropriate services through bilingual and bicultural providers to Oregon's Latino/a/x population, more than half a million strong.

We recognize that successful implementation of the recommendations in this report requires partnerships across systems and agencies. It's only together we can meet the needs of Oregon's Latino/a/x population revealed in the report, and other underrepresented communities served by OACO.

Sincerely,
Fariborz Pakseresht, Director
Oregon Department of Human Services

“Assisting People to Become Independent, Healthy and Safe”

Senator Jeff Golden, Co-Chair
Representative Greg Smith, Co-Chair
Members of the Joint Ways and Means, Subcommittee on General Government

March 3, 2021

For more information please contact:

Soren Metzger
ODHS Government Relations Manager
soren.k.metzger@dhsosha.state.or.us
503-277-9602