

March 11, 2021

To Whom it May Concern:

I am writing to you today to ask for your support of HB 2164, **Cover All People**.

Vive Northwest (Vive NW) is a LatinX owned and operated organization working to advance outdoor and health equity for all. In addition to connecting directly to the LatinX community across the state through outdoor outings in our mission to diversify the outdoors, we work at the intersection of outdoor and health equity in our multilingual, multicultural communications work with the Oregon Health Authority and its community partners. We have seen first hand the disproportionate impact COVID-19 has had on the LatinX and Indigenous communities of our state.

An innovate pilot program, **Cover All People** would provide health care coverage to medically underserved people including undocumented adults, DACA recipients, legal permanent residents and young adults who age out of Cover All Kids. Only Oregonians under 138% (190% for pregnant women) of the poverty level would be eligible.

Cover All People would ensure that recipients receive timely and preventative healthcare. It would help achieve healthy adults and healthy communities. **Cover All People** would reduce healthcare costs borne by taxpayers by extending authority to cover a critical population. Increased access to healthcare via **Cover All People** would result in a stronger economy, improved health outcomes and healthy communities.

As you know, Latino/Latina/Latinx/BIPOC Oregonians are the backbone of our economy. Overrepresented in the ranks of essential workers, these taxpayers take much higher health risks to keep our economy strong, especially during the current pandemic. Expanded healthcare access is linked to obtaining and maintaining employment, which benefits the economy in general. Health insurance coverage also reduces individual debt (medical and non-health-related), allowing individuals to spend more in the economy. Lastly, healthier people are more productive in the workplace.

As you know, being uninsured disproportionately affects rural Oregonians, communities of color, and low-wage working families. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted significant racial and economic disparities in healthcare access and outcomes. Healthcare coverage is a tool to help ensure better care outcomes among communities who are medically underserved. In geographic locations reporting demographic data, communities of color are bearing a disproportionate burden of COVID-19, and are being infected - and dying - at a higher rate compared to the white population.

We hope you will support HB 2164 - **Cover All People** and help reverse the trends outlined above. Thank you very much

Sincerely,

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