



OREGON ACADEMY OF
FAMILY PHYSICIANS

March 15, 2021

Chair Prusak, Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Oregon Academy of Family Physicians, I am writing to you today to ask for your support of HB 2164, **Cover All People**.

My name is Tony Germann and I am a rural family medicine provider working in the heart of the Willamette Valley at Salud Medical Clinic and Pacific Pediatrics Clinic in Woodburn, Oregon. Additionally, I am the clinical medical director for our Federally Qualified Health Center where I have a clear vantage point into the challenges our Latinx patients confront during this pandemic. Prior to COVID-19, our patients struggled with access to care and subsequently poor health outcomes. Often times my patients present late to care due to their heightened concerns of the cost of care and lack of insurance. Our community members arrive to our emergency departments and are delayed in their ailments where our state is therefore providing care at a more costly time point. I support and hope you will as well, the **Cover All People** legislation which will vastly improve the lives of my patients.

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. We can lift up our community with this bill and rebuild our economy following this pandemic which my families in the Woodburn area severely need. 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. If we have learned anything during this pandemic it is that the health of one affects the health of all our community members.

As you know, Latino/Latina/Latinx/BIPOC Oregonians are the backbone of our economy. My patients throughout the pandemic never stopped going to work. They kept the food coming to our grocery stores and dinner tables despite their elevated risks. 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 also 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,

Antonio Germann, MD MPH