



To: Members of the House Committee on Health Care

From: State Representative Maxine Dexter, M.D., House District 33

Date: March 16th, 2021

Subject: HB 3352

Chair Prusak, Vice-Chair Salinas, Vice Chair Hayden and Members of the Committee,

For the record, my name is Dr. Maxine Dexter, State Representative for House District 33, encompassing NW Portland and NE Washington County on the indigenous lands of the Cowlitz, Clackamas, and Grand Ronde. I am grateful for this opportunity today to request your full support for our shared endeavor to *Cover All People*.

The last year has shown us how clearly our entire community's health relies on each of us having access to affordable care; how the grave inequities in social supports have put the lives of our BIPOC community at higher risk than other Oregonians. This reality is unquestionably unacceptable and we have a chance, with this legislative policy, to start to make it right.

As a critical care physician who has cared for patients with severe COVID since the very first person was diagnosed with it in Oregon, I can tell you without hesitation that this infection has been devastating for each and every patient who has needed life support. I will also tell you that in 20 years of medical practice, I have never seen anything that impacted our communities of color so disproportionately.

We must *Cover All People*. We must cover adults who would qualify for Medicaid, if not for their immigration status. We must seize this moment to confront the systemic racism that exists in every section of society and make meaningful change to address the health inequities that our undocumented community faces.

In 2017, 14% of our agricultural industry and 12% of construction workers were undocumented immigrants ¹. They are important contributors to our community. They literally help feed and shelter us. They deserve healthcare. Their lack of access to affordable healthcare perpetuates inequality and

instability, undermining the chances their children will have a secure platform from which to build a secure and rewarding life. We *must* do better, and with this policy, we *will* do better.

Colleagues, I urge you to join me in voting yes to *Cover All People*.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Maxine Dexter', written in a cursive style.

Representative Maxine Dexter, M.D.

House District 33 (NW Portland and NE Washington County)

¹ - <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/06/10/a-majority-of-americans-say-immigrants-mostly-fill-jobs-u-s-citizens-do-not-want/>