



3/16/21

To Chair Patterson, and members of the Senate Committee on Health Care:

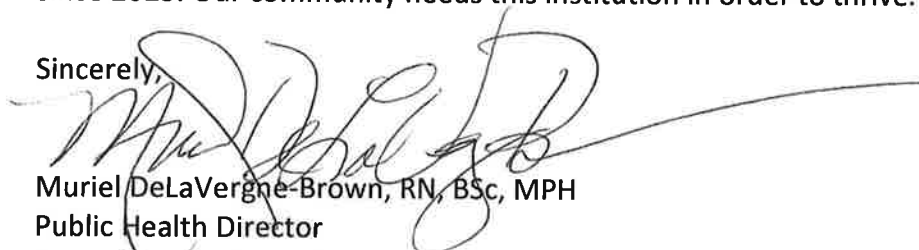
We, as organizations and members of the Central Oregon community, declare our support for SB 741. The Central Oregon Health Council plays a crucial role in our area and having legislation that cements their existence gives them the credibility they need in order to fulfill their role as generous innovator, neutral partner, and effective collaborator. As the Public Health Director for Crook County, I have been involved in the Central Oregon Health Council from the beginning and it has made a major difference in health care in Central Oregon.

Central Oregon has a habit of doing healthcare differently than the rest of the state, and the COHC is central to our creativity and teamwork. The COHC has brought partners to the table who have no direct financial connection to healthcare, which broadens previously narrow discussions about emergency room visit rates to the broader understanding of wellbeing and social determinants.

We entrust millions of Medicaid dollars each year to the careful stewardship of the COHC. Their transparency, unbiased approach, and commitment to process has given us full confidence in their leadership. To date they have directed over \$20 million into programs with long-term vision, including wraparound home-visiting services for expecting mothers, Prevent Diabetes which is now a covered benefit through Medicaid, and the MOMs program which offers incentives and support to mothers in addiction recovery. It is the programs like these that would not otherwise be accessible to our community members that make the Central Oregon Health Council's oversight indispensable.

If you pass SB 741, you guarantee the leadership and collaboration we have come to rely on since 2013. Our community needs this institution in order to thrive.

Sincerely,



Muriel DeLaVergne-Brown, RN, BSc, MPH
Public Health Director
Crook County Health Department

