



*A driving force for health equity*

*Submitted via electronic mail*

February 1, 2022

The Honorable Anna Williams  
Oregon House of Representatives  
900 Court St. NE, H-473  
Salem, Oregon 97301

*Re: Support for HB 4011*

Dear Chair Williams,

On behalf of OCHIN, I appreciate the opportunity to offer support for HB 4011, which provides loan forgiveness incentives for mental health workers who serve children in child-caring agencies and creates a mental health associate apprenticeship program. Oregon is facing persistent and growing workforce shortages in community health centers, public health departments, and critical access hospitals. OCHIN applauds your leadership and efforts to alleviate this growing crisis.

OCHIN is an Oregon based [national health research network](#) and continuous learning health system locally-controlled provider collaborative that offers technology solutions, informatics, evidence-based research, and policy insights. OCHIN network members in Oregon provide care to more than 580,000 patients and had more than 2.3 million visits in 2021. For over two decades, OCHIN has advanced equitable health care solutions by leveraging the strength of our network's unique data set and the practical experience of our members to drive technology innovation at scale for patients and providers in underserved communities.

The impact of COVID-19, including the current Omicron surge, has negatively impacted the workforce among community-based health care organizations that face unprecedented rates of turnover and burnout. Community clinics are struggling to maintain capacity and cannot scale to meet growing demand - an alarming trend, since health centers play a critical role in reducing burden on local emergency departments, particularly in rural and underserved communities. Community clinics are hardest hit by vacancies among support and operational staff who shoulder clinics' administrative duties (including front desk, credentialing, and billing) so providers can focus on delivering patient care. The need for technically trained support and operational staff will only grow with the adoption and implementation of modernized health information technology, which is urgently needed to transform clinical care delivery and improve public health capabilities at scale.

Establishing loan forgiveness incentives and apprenticeships to recruit much needed health care workers is an effort OCHIN fully supports. Please contact me at [stollj@ochin.org](mailto:stollj@ochin.org) to discuss how we can help to develop the health care workforce Oregon desperately needs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jennifer Stoll".

Jennifer Stoll  
Executive Vice President  
External Affairs