

Thank you Chair, Co-chair and Members of the Committee.

My name is Win Mar Lar Kyin. I am working at Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization (IRCO) as the Health Services Manager. [IRCO](#) is a well-known non-profit organization founded in 1976 by refugees seeking workforce services. IRCO is the largest community-based organization in Oregon led by immigrants and refugees, providing culturally specific and culturally responsive core services. Our programs engage community members across more than 60 sites statewide, including our four culturally specific centers: Pacific Islander & Asian Family Center, Africa House, Greater Middle East Center, and the Slavic & Eastern European Center. IRCO is one of the member organizations of the Community Health Equity Coalition (CHEC) made up of more than 80 community-based organizations who are collectively responding to the public health needs of more than 500,000 marginalized Oregonians across the state.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, we contributed our great efforts to enhancing contact tracing and testing rates, to increase vaccine coverage, and to effectively educate the communities on how to prevent the COVID-19 infection. We also deliver wraparound services for COVID-19 positive patients who speak English language regardless of their country of origin or ethnicity. Furthermore, we participate in the Oregon Health Plan enrollment programs by rendering culturally specific services to maximize the coverage of affordable health insurance among immigrants and refugees.

In 2022, IRCO conducted the Community Need Assessment Survey (CNA) with 528 community members from 23 different language groups representing more than 50 cultural and national backgrounds. The [CNA](#) is a community-driven process that reveals the barriers of Social Determinants of Health encountered by immigrant and refugee communities. For example, a lack of health insurance is a common challenge for almost all groups; cited by 20% of African, 23% of Greater Middle Eastern, 29% of Pacific Islander, and 44% of Asian respondents. Another common issue is a lack of knowledge or information on available resources and how to navigate the healthcare system, cited by 18% of Pacific Islander, 24% of Asian, and 29% of African respondents.

I would like to express our sincere gratitude for the current service level funding and additional funding included in the Governor's proposed budget to improve health equity among the underserved population. The additional funding would allow our organization to expand the culturally specific programs to reach more people for better coverage so that it will lead to reduced health disparities. I would like to request an investment of \$286M above the current service level for OHA Public Health Modernization Budget, which includes \$100M for CBOs who are a lifeline to Oregon's most diverse and marginalized populations across the state.

As a community-based organization, IRCO strongly endorses the SB 5525 based on CNA survey findings which pointed out the vital role of sustainable community health programs to fulfill ever changing needs by the diverse community.

Thank you.