



May 2nd, 2023

Dear Co-Chairs Steiner and Sanchez and Members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means,

My name is Carly Hood-Ronick, and I am writing to you today as the CEO of Project Access NOW, a Portland-based nonprofit organization working to improve access to healthcare and health-related resources for Oregonians in need. As an organization working on the ground to create healthier communities in our state, the actions of the legislature have significant impacts on the work we do and the lives of the people we serve. During the current session, we have 5 priorities that have arrived in the Ways and Means Committee that we believe should receive adequate funding in your budgetary decisions:

- 1. Universal Health Plan Governance Board (SB 1089):** We strongly believe that the minimal investment of fully funding this board will set our state up for success on its next critical steps towards much-needed universal coverage in Oregon. Oregon has always been a leader and innovator in the healthcare space and this legislation will ensure we continue to carry that torch.
- 2. Nonprofit Modernization (SB 606):** Community organizations like Project Access NOW frequently struggle with a lack of funding, burdensome grant requirements, and other bureaucratic issues that result in burnout, understaffing, and turnover. Our state depends on nonprofit organizations to support the well-being of Oregonians, and now is the time to invest in this sector.
- 3. Community Information Exchange Governance Board (HB 3303):** It's no secret that it's challenging for healthcare providers, social service organizations, and other stakeholders to share data, make referrals, and reduce duplicitous care amongst themselves. A CIE Governance Board represents the next step towards allowing organizations to communicate more effectively and ultimately serve clients better, and we encourage you to fully fund the board to ensure this work is successful.
- 4. Bridge Plan:** The Basic Health Plan, intended to cover individuals between 138 and 200% of the Federal Poverty Level with OHP-like benefits as the Public Health Emergency ends, was not directly legislated during this session, but it is a part of the state budget, and we encourage you to fund this program in its full capacity.
- 5. State-based Marketplace (SB 972):** Over the next few years, Oregon has the opportunity to implement a number of exciting new programs that will improve access to health coverage, some of which are mentioned above. To implement these new programs and increase flexibility, efficiency, and effective data collection opportunities, Oregon must transition from the federal health insurance marketplace to a State-Based Marketplace. We urge you to fully fund this legislation as detailed in SB 972.

In November 2022, the voters of Oregon made a commitment to healthcare as a right in our state by overwhelmingly passing Measure 111. This year, the legislature is now faced with numerous opportunities to meet that commitment, which is now a constitutional obligation. Thank you for your service to our state, and we encourage you to continue to meet the commitment to a Right to Healthcare in Oregon by fully funding the priorities listed here.

Thank you,

Carly Hood-Ronick MPA, MPH

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'CARLY HOOD-RONICK', written in a cursive style.

Chief Executive Officer
Project Access NOW

Cc: PANOW staff advocacy lead, Peter Merritt: peter.merritt@projectaccessnow.org