

To: Senate Committee on Health Care  
From: Julene West, Oregon Interpreters in Action  
Re: Support for Statewide Health Care Interpreter Portal

Dear Chair Patterson, Vice-Chair Hayden, and members of the Committee,

My name is Julene West, and I am a certified Spanish language interpreter with 43 years of experience. I started doing this work as a way to support myself and my children while also offering a highly-needed service to the Hispanic community. It's very fulfilling to provide language access to people who need my services and I receive a lot of positive feedback from my clients.

I know that medical providers mean well, but because of low-quality interpretation services, I have seen misinformation regarding prescriptions, symptoms to look out for, what to do when symptoms present themselves, and that puts patients in danger. I also see a lack of patience and cultural courtesy when it comes to non-English speakers that makes me feel terrible. It makes me want to do more, but it's hard to keep doing this as a job because of the pay.

Working with language interpreting agencies means that they can charge whatever they want, and I get maybe half of that. If there was a way state-certified interpreters could be scheduled and paid directly by the state, we could make more money and get more people the help they need.