

To: Senate Committee on Health Care
From: Greysi Balcazar, 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 Greysi Balcazar, and I have been a certified health care interpreter in Spanish for seven years. I became an interpreter because, as a member of the Hispanic community, I saw the need for our people to get professional interpretation services for their basic health needs. It feels good to know I'm doing the best I can for people who often don't feel heard.

Without a qualified health care interpreter, I know from experience that people get limited and poor service. It's not enough to just speak the language, you have to understand how things work in the medical world.

I do this work to help people, but it is very hard to do this as a full-time job because of the inconsistent working hours and lack of healthcare insurance or any other type of benefits. We need to be able to provide for our families.

I want to keep doing this job because it's important, but we need consistent hours and pay that reflect our skill-level. A payment and scheduling portal that would allow us to work directly with the state would be a good start.