

To: Senate Committee on Health Care
From: Shahab Motameni, 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 Shahab Motameni and I have been working as a health care interpreter in Dari and Farsi for three years. I like to help people and enjoy interacting with people of various backgrounds.

It feels good to give people support to get the health care that they need, because I know that limited English proficiency can greatly impact the level of care that people get.

I enjoy my work, but the lack of income consistency and administrative difficulty that comes from dealing with multiple interpreting companies in order to make a living make it very hard to keep doing it.

It seems that some (not all) interpreting companies are looking to give providers cheaper access to interpreters (giving themselves a better competitive position compared to other companies), and/or to keep a bigger chunk of the money for themselves by employing unqualified or uncertified interpreters.

Patients need qualified and certified interpreters, because incorrect interpretation can seriously impact their health.

Creating a state-based system to schedule and pay qualified and certified interpreters would set basic yet easily observable guidelines for the private interpreting companies to adhere to. It would also make it much easier for interpreters to make a living and give us peace of mind.