



January 31, 2025

Senate Committee on Labor and Business  
Oregon State Capitol  
900 Court St NE  
Salem, OR 97301

**Re: Support for SB 605**

Chair Taylor, Vice Chair Bonham, and Members of the Committee:

The Oregon Health Equity Alliance, OHEA, urges your support of SB 605, Ending Credit Reporting on Medical Debt. The bill aims to address the serious issue of medical debt impacting Oregonians and ensure greater financial and health equity for all.

OHEA is a people of color-led collaborative, organized to center and uplift the wisdom of our communities of color through racial justice informed health equity policies and practices. OHEA serves Clackamas, Multnomah, and Washington counties as one of nine regional health equity coalitions across Oregon.

As an organization that advocates for healthcare access, we understand when money *is limited, communities are often forced to choose between immediate, material needs over a doctor's visit. Especially medical care that may result in medical debt that will affect their livelihood.* Everyone should have the freedom, resources, and ability to seek and receive care without fear of debilitating medical debt.

Nearly one in three Oregonians has medical debt because of routine or emergency care accrued in the past two years. Unlike other forms of debt, medical debt is not by choice. It arises from unexpected emergencies or necessary, life-saving treatments. Communities of color, uninsured individuals, and disabled adults face disproportionate impacts, further exacerbating existing inequities in access to care.

SB 605 would:

- Remove existing medical debt from credit reports.

- Prohibit debt collectors, hospitals, and other reporting entities from reporting medical debt to credit reporting agencies.
- Ensure the credit reporting ban includes credit reports used for employment and tenant screening.
- Include targeted healthcare credit cards such as CareCredit in this ban.

Patients frequently face impossible choices between paying medical bills and meeting basic needs, leading to severe financial and emotional stress. These sacrifices often worsen their health outcomes, creating a devastating cycle of financial instability and deteriorating health.

In addition, medical debt is one of the most [disputed forms](#) of debt, and people often receive collection notices for debts they did not owe and bills that should have been covered by insurance. Consumers applying for a loan or mortgage may feel pressured into paying off disputed medical bills to minimize harm to their credit score.

We urge your support of SB 605 to provide Oregonians with protections so their credit isn't harmed by medical debt. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony and your service to Oregon communities.

Sincerely,  
Oregon Health Equity Alliance