



February 5, 2025

Re: Support for the Healthier Oregon Program Budget Ask

Michelle Glass
Policy and Advocacy Coordinator
SO Health-E, the Southern Oregon Regional Health Equity Coalition
2931 S Pacific Hwy, Medford OR 97501

Oregon State Legislature
Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Services
Chair Campos
900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Dear Co-Chairs Campos and Valderrama, Members of the Subcommittee,

I am writing on behalf of SO Health-E, the Regional Health Equity Coalition of Southern Oregon, to share how the Healthier Oregon Program has positively impacted the lives of the people we serve in Jackson and Josephine Counties.

We work directly with many families who struggle to access necessary medical care due to a lack of health coverage through our community outreach and our monthly parent meet ups. Although this has been the case for years, the collective impacts of the Almeda and Obenchain fires in 2020, Covid-19 pandemic disruptions to the economy and to community health, and recent inflation in grocery and housing prices have combined to make the struggle to afford healthcare nearly impossible for many families. The fact that immigration status is one less barrier to navigate is critical for many families and for the partners who support them.

We urge the Legislature to fully fund the Healthier Oregon Program and all the navigators who work tirelessly to connect people to these life-saving and cost-saving resources.

We believe that the HOP is in line with Oregon's values and with a commitment to fiscally responsibility to fund healthcare access instead of costly emergency room utilization as the only option for care.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Michelle Glass, Policy and Advocacy Coordinator
SO Health-E, the Regional Health Equity Coalition serving Jackson and Josephine Counties