

Lavinia Goto, Director of Operations
Oregon Wellness Network (OWN)*, Salem, OR

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

Dear Senator Campos and Members of the Human Services Subcommittee,

My name is Lavinia and I live in Salem, Oregon. I am a nurse and health educator. I am writing to share about my work with the Healthier Oregon Program (HOP) and why I feel it is important to our community.


The Healthier Oregon program has helped to connect members of our community to health and social services who otherwise would remain without access. Viruses, physical and mental illness do not care if a person is insured or uninsured, and will attack anyone. By ensuring access to acute and long-term care to all members of a community, one raises the overall health of the community.

For HOP recipients, having comprehensive health insurance is a huge step forward; however, having health coverage alone is sometimes not enough. I learned this first hand when OWN participated in two free health screenings for residents of Marion County late last year. We had both OHP and non-OHP members attend and found that for some, despite having coverage, they were afraid to access care for fear of being put into a system that could possibly be reported to federal agencies. The other challenges were lack of primary care doctors who were taking new patients (or who they could communicate with), and the lack of available services at times when consumers were available to go; i.e., in the evenings or on the weekend

What was surprising to me was the number of adults who attended the screening and had abnormal screening results. Many needed follow up with their primary care but because of the challenges mentioned earlier, many were not planning to seek care until their health condition affected their ability to work.

While there remain challenges in building trust among the HOP population and connecting them to the medical community, the solution starts with having OHP coverage. I encourage the Oregon Legislature to continue to fully fund the Medicaid Budget and the Healthier Oregon Program and all the navigators who help people connect to the program every day across our state.

Sincerely,



Lavinia Goto, RN, MPH, DHA
Oregon Wellness Network/O4AD