



February 21, 2025

Written testimony for SB 528

Senate Committee on Health Care

Chair Patterson, Vice-Chair Hayden and members of the Committee,

For the record, my name is Amy Fellows and I am writing this letter as Executive Director of We Can Do Better in support of SB 528, a bill that will offer more solid support for Regional Health Equity Coalitions (RHECs).

Regional Health Equity Coalitions (RHECs) are autonomous, community-driven, cross-sector groups. The RHEC model works by building on the inherent strengths of local communities to meaningfully involve them in identifying sustainable, long-term, policy, system and environmental solutions to increase health equity for communities of color, and those living at the intersection of race/ethnicity and other marginalized identities.

Community led and driven solutions are important because we need to make policy based on the lived experiences of communities that have not historically been heard.

The RHEC model was designed intentionally to ensure that communities most impacted by health inequities were at the forefront of policy, systems and environment change work that impact their communities.

I live in Eugene and was involved in the creation of one of the newer Lane and Douglas County Regional Health Equity Coalitions called RISE of the Umpqua and Willamette Valleys. We Can Do Better has also been a member of Oregon Health Equity Alliance for many years and our Allies for a Healthier Oregon Coordinator participates on their Policy Committee.

We support the model of RHECs that prioritizes meaningful engagement of communities most impacted by inequities to lead efforts; and honors community wisdom by ensuring policy and system change solutions build upon community strengths.

We support this bill because every county in Oregon should have a Regional Health Equity Coalition supporting their communities.

Sincerely,

Amy Fellows, MPH
Executive Director
We Can Do Better