

Building Healthier Communities Together

February 27, 2025

Oregon State Legislature
Senate Committee on Health Care
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Submitted electronically via OLIS

RE: SB 528 and SB 530 supporting Rural Health Equity Coalitions

Chair Patterson and Members of the Committee:

Samaritan Health Services is a nonprofit regional health system offering care to Oregonians in Benton, Lincoln, Linn and portions of Marion and Polk counties. Driven by its mission of building healthier communities together, it brings together community hospitals, physician clinics and health insurance plans to serve more than 275,000 residents of the mid-Willamette Valley and central Oregon Coast.

InterCommunity Health Network (IHN) CCO is woven into the fabric of Samaritan Health Services and our communities. IHN-CCO partners with organizations foundational to community well-being and provides coordinated care for 87,000 people comprised of our friends, neighbors and community boosters.

IHN-CCO strongly supports SB 528 and SB 530, two critical pieces of legislation that will greatly enhance the work of Regional Health Equity Coalitions (RHECs) in Oregon. These bills will strengthen RHECs' capacity to continue advancing health equity and improve health outcomes across the state by building on previous legislative efforts and responding to the needs identified by local communities.

For our service area, we have had the privilege of working closely with the Linn Benton Lincoln Health Equity Alliance (LBLHEA), which has played an essential role in amplifying the needs of underserved populations in our Regional Community Health Improvement Plan. Their leadership has been pivotal in advancing data equity initiatives and bridging the gap between community needs and service providers, ensuring that resources are allocated where they are most needed.

RHECs have demonstrated tremendous value by fostering strong partnerships with healthcare providers, public health organizations, community-based organizations, and government agencies to implement programs that reduce health disparities. Whether through developing policies that promote community

health or providing culturally responsive education, RHECs are critical to ensuring that all Oregonians have equitable access to care and opportunities to improve their health.

Together, these bills are vital not only for supporting the continued success of RHECs but also for addressing broader issues tied to the Social Determinants of Health. By empowering local communities to lead efforts in tackling these challenges, SB 528 and SB 530 will contribute to long-term health improvements and cost savings for the state.

We fully support the passage of SB 528 and SB 530, as they align with our commitment to advancing health equity and community-centered health improvements. Together with the Coordinated Care Organization (CCO) model, these bills represent crucial steps forward in addressing Oregon's most pressing health equity challenges. By investing in RHECs, we are investing in a healthier, more equitable future for all Oregonians.

We strongly urge you, to join us in supporting the passage of SBs 528 and 530.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andi Easton". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Andi" and last name "Easton" clearly legible.

Andi Easton
Government Relations Director
Samaritan Health Services