

Submitter: Laura Erceg
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB530
Chair Patterson, Vice-Chair Hayden, and Members of the Committee:

I'm writing in support of SB 528. My name is Laura Erceg, and I am member organization of our local RHEC, the South Coast Health Equity Coalition. SB 528 will provide critical resources to RHECs so they can continue reducing health inequities by identifying the most important issues impacting priority populations in underserved, rural regions of Oregon. By assessing these barriers through grassroots community engagement, they are able to uplift the voices of their communities to create effective solutions through policy and systems change. The expansion of RHECs will ensure that priority populations all over the state are getting their needs met.

I support this bill because I have seen the impact RHECs have in our community through authentic, continual engagement with community members who are not traditionally centered in healthcare and well-being. Centering community has led to responsive programming that I know would not have been able to take place within our larger health care systems with the same level of responsiveness. I worked in our local children's mental health field for ten years before I moved into my current role as the Director of our local Pride organization. I sat in meetings where the question of "how do we bring community into these spaces?" was asked and never successfully realized. When working alongside of the RHEC, I am seeing that goal realized because the RHEC and our local organizational partners are noticing.

Please support this bill. In order for this work to be sustainable, we need to be able to keep up with the cost of inflation. To have a single position funded to accomplish this work is impossible. Increasing our funding is a direct investment in the sustainability of a program that is showing results now.

I urge you to vote yes on SB 528."

Thank you,
Laura Erceg