

Submitter: Juliet Rutter
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB530

Testimony in support of SB 530
2/28/2025

Chair Patterson, Vice-Chair Hayden, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Juliet Rutter, and I am the RHEC Coordinator at RISE of the Umpqua and Willamette Valleys. I urge your strong support of SB 530 because it will provide critical resources to Regional Health Equity Coalitions (RHECs) so we can continue our work to reduce health inequities by identifying the most important issues impacting our communities. By addressing these barriers through grassroots community engagement, we are able to uplift the voices of their communities to create solutions to barriers through policy and systems change. RHECs need to be provided with funding that will keep up with the cost of doing business in our state so that we can continue to serve those most underserved and create a healthier, more resilient Oregon for all.

I support this bill because it is a fiscally responsible investment that will reduce long-term healthcare costs, improve community well-being, and strengthen our public health infrastructure. With the cost of business having gone up significantly recently, and the funding not having been increased since 2014, it is clear that there is a gap in policy that must be addressed for RHECs to continue to do our important work.

A small sample of some of the statewide RHEC accomplishments over the past 10 years include:

- Eastern Oregon Health Equity Alliance ensured rural representation on Oregon's Healthcare Interpreter Council.
- Mid-Columbia Health Equity Advocates helped remove barriers to obtaining state identification cards, improving access to essential services.
- Linn Benton Lincoln Health Equity Alliance advocated for language access services for Spanish speakers in a local public health nutrition program.
- SO Health-E collaborated with public health during the 2023 Jackson and Josephine Community Health Assessment (CHA) and Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). By engaging with community members who are typically underrepresented in these projects, they increased CHA participation by 49% from 2018.
- During the wildfires, SO Health-E worked with partners to raise and distribute over \$1.25 million in fire relief, they directly supported 66 families who lost their homes to get back into stable housing, and they provided food, water, PPE, and mental health

support to Latine and Native American communities impacted by the wildfires.

With this funding we can continue to do work similar to what was mentioned above and expand our services, reaching more underserved people.

This resource is vital to our community and these resources will allow for an immediate increase in Regional Health Equity Coalitions capacity to support them. I urge you to vote yes on SB 530.

Thank you for your consideration and leadership,
Juliet Rutter MS, GC
RISE of the Umpqua and Willamette Valleys