

Submitter: Denise Hughes-Tafen
On Behalf Of: Linn Benton Lincoln Health Equity Alliance
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB528

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for SB 528. My name is Denise Hughes-Tafen, and I live in Corvallis, Oregon. My professional background is in Early Childhood Special Education and Human Services. I firmly believe in the work of the Linn Benton Lincoln Health Equity Alliance. SB 528 is vital in providing crucial resources to Regional Health Equity Coalitions (RHECs) to continue their critical work in addressing health inequities in rural and underserved communities across Oregon. By utilizing grassroots community engagement, RHECs can identify the most pressing issues and advocate for meaningful change in policies and systems. The expansion of RHECs, as proposed by this bill, will ensure that communities across the state, especially those in rural areas, have access to the support and resources they need to thrive.

I support this bill because I have seen and participated in some of the programming from this alliance. For example, this alliance has hosted numerous workshops aimed at educating the community about health. In addition to being a community member I am also a Faculty at a community college. My students have benefited from the programming this organization offers. Our health is impacted by conditions in our communities. There are so many aspects to health. We also know that access to resources that ensures that we can all be healthy is challenging. The Linn Benton Lincoln Health Equity Alliance is a voice that champions removing these challenges; it is a voice advocating for representation and equity. The health of our communities is dependent on all of us having the resources needed to be healthy. This alliance is doing this work. They are also bringing along with them a network of community organizations who know the heart of the populations they serve. Organizations who have relationships with the community and understand the needs of all sections of our communities. Additionally, future professionals, such as the students I work with are learning how to do this work. The Linn Benton Lincoln Health Equity Alliance serves as a model and their work should be supported.

This bill will significantly increase the capacity of RHECs to support our communities. I strongly urge you to vote in favor of SB 528.

Thank you,

Denise Hughes-Tafen, Ph.D.
Corvallis, OR

