

Submitter: Dharmakrishna Mirza
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 am writing to express my support for SB 530. My name is Dharmakrishna Mirza and I am a member of the Linn Benton Lincoln Health Equity Alliance, I work for a regional health equity coalition partner, a serve as a public servant on several public health policy councils, and Public Health PhD student, but I'm writing most importantly today as a community member. SB 530 is essential for ensuring that RHECs can continue their important work in reducing health inequities by providing the necessary funding and resources to meet the needs of underserved communities.

This bill will also provide annual budgeted inflation adjustments to RHEC funding, ensuring that the organizations can keep up with rising costs and continue providing the services that are so vital for community health.

I support this bill because the cost of doing impactful health work in our real communities is a burden that we cannot maintain if we continue to fund our organizations as someone who has needed access medical services through public benefit for much of my life, and now it's someone that both provides those benefits to others and as someone who research is how to provide the services and the systems that provide them, I can't underscore how important it is that we ensure that our services can keep up with the rising costs. When thinking about the priority populations of our regional health equity coalition, I can't underscore the need for adequate funding. This is part of my professional and expert opinion but also my lived experience as a transition of color, a person in recovery, disabled person, HIV positive person, and a first generation immigrant. Regional health equity collision help to amplify the values of our communities. Oregon is one of the first places I've ever felt supported in my life and then I could be myself without fear. That is because the values of your constituents are to be inclusive equitable and just. Without regional health equity coalition being adequately supported people like me die. To get left out of the wayside, we become too much of a financial burden to begin to develop the programs and services that we need despite us being some of the most heavily impacted by inadequate funding of culturally specific and place based services that are designed through our voice in advocacy.

These resources will allow RHECs to continue to strengthen their capacity and extend their support to the communities who need it most. I urge you to vote yes on SB 530.

Thanks you,
Dharmakrishna Mirza