

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

I am writing to express my strong support for SB 528. My name is Angel Harris, and I have been a member of the Linn Benton Lincoln Health Equity Alliance (LBLHEA) since 2017, currently serving as a board member. SB 528 is essential for providing crucial resources to Regional Health Equity Coalitions (RHECs) to continue their vital work in addressing health inequities in rural and underserved communities across Oregon. Through grassroots community engagement, RHECs identify the most pressing issues and advocate for meaningful change in policies and systems.

The proposed expansion of RHECs under this bill will ensure that communities throughout the state, particularly those in rural areas, gain access to the support and resources needed to thrive.

As a nurse, I strongly support this bill because I have witnessed firsthand the need for more resources and improved access to better health outcomes for priority populations. One of the major health goals in Oregon and across the nation is to reduce health disparities. The Oregon Health Authority (OHA) has set a goal of eliminating health disparities in the state by 2030. These disparities contribute to higher rates of illness and more severe health outcomes due to differences in healthcare access and quality. RHECs are a proven strategy for helping to meet this goal.

At LBLHEA, we work alongside communities, organizations, and individuals to foster healthy communities through policy, systems, and environmental change. LBLHEA provides a space for community building and empowerment, working directly with health departments and coordinated care organizations. RHECs play a crucial role in these efforts and bring tangible benefits to priority populations.

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 for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Angel Harris, MSN, RN