



March 5, 2025

Northwest Family Services supports family stability, child well-being, and victims of crime through the social determinants of health. Our services include housing, behavioral health, youth engagement, health navigation, and basic needs reaching 20,000 Oregonians last year. A priority community that we serve identify as Latino. We believe Oregon can create a system of care for Latinos because of our many successes. In Oregon residences have a constitutional right to affordable and high-quality health care. Oregon has expanded Medicaid and have the Healthier Oregon Program. Our CCOs are responsive and innovative. In many parts of Oregon our Federally Qualified Health Centers have culturally specific integrated care. The Connect Oregon system is improving our health care providers ability to refer patients to social services that impact health such as nutrition, climate and housing. We have been supporting traditional health worker and culturally specific community organizations.

Despite these amazing resources there remain vast health disparities. Latinos in many parts of Oregon have a poor experience of care. Distrust of the health care system is very high. There are sever shortages of culturally appropriate health care providers. The entire health care system has been created by non-Latinos who in the best care engage our community in "advisory" roles, if we are engaged at all.

A Latino Health System Task force will convene legislators, health care providers, system leaders, Latino advocacy organizations, higher education and consumer representatives. The leadership they provide will both lead to policy suggestions, and it will create partnerships between the critical health system, social services and higher education sectors.

The resources and good intentions are more than sufficient to create a health system in Oregon that overcomes the health inequities we are concerned about. A Latino Health System Task Force will create have the standing and authority to drive the innovation we need.

Sincerely yours,

Rose Fuller
Executive Director