



Oregon Pediatric Society

A Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. Incorporated in Oregon

DATE: March 10, 2025

TO: Chair Nosse, Vice-Chairs Javadi and Nelson, and members of the
House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care

FROM: Jaime Peterson, MD, MPH, FAAP
Listos: School Readiness Lab Director
Kinder Coaching Director
and on behalf of the Oregon Pediatric Society

SUBJECT: Support for House Bill 3650 – Latino Health Act

For the record, my name is Jaime Peterson, MD, MPH. I am a pediatrician and Latino child health researcher in Portland and a member of the Oregon Pediatric Society, the state chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. I write today in strong support of the Latino Health Act HB 3650.

I am a primary care pediatrician who serves many Latino children and families. As a growing population in Oregon, there are large gaps in health care services, programs, and clinical providers to address the health needs of Latino children and families in Oregon. Latino families represent more than 12% of Oregon's population but less than 6% of health care providers identify as Hispanic or Latino. This bill creates a much needed network of culturally specific providers addressing key health disparities for Latino children and families. When families receive care that is linguistically and culturally concordant by providers across the health care space (clinicians, social workers, community health workers), Latino parents can advocate for their children and take better care of their own health.

At present, the Oregon health care system is not ready to serve Latino children and families. I see children in my practice whose families face health disparities that could be mitigated with community based, culturally concordant networks of care in Oregon. I have seen families receive inequitable care due to language barriers between parents and a clinical provider: a mother unable to ask questions about her newborn's unexpected diagnosis or clarify the risk of side effects for a new medication with the pharmacist. I have seen families struggle to access basic health needs due to immigration status: a father afraid to seek care for an injury at work. I have seen families nod politely when services are offered on a handout in English when they themselves cannot read in English or Spanish. The task force created from this legislation would help to identify the most pressing health disparities and convene experts to develop a network to better serve Latino families.



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Community health workers are trusted partners in community and health settings who can help families navigate complex health systems. In response to Latino parent feedback, our bilingual community health workers meet with families of young children to navigate early learning programs and support parents as their child's first teacher. We know that when children are ready to learn at the start of kindergarten, they are more likely to succeed, be healthy and more productive as future adults. Kinder Coaching with bilingual community health workers is an example of the type of family-centered health care services our state needs to meet the specific disparities of Latino families in Oregon.

Ensuring the growing number of Latino children grow up to be healthy and happy adults is my job and my passion. But we cannot do it without a stronger, more culturally responsive health system that collaborates with all sectors in our community. I urge you to vote yes on HB 3650, and establish the Latino Health Task Force to begin this important work in Oregon. Thank you for your consideration.