

Submitter: Jamie Osborn MD  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3650

I am writing in support of the establishment of a Latino Health System Task Force.

I serve as the population health officer of La Clinica, an FQHC whose area of focus includes the monolingual Spanish-speaking community. I am a family physician who provides bilingual primary care in the most impoverished census track in the state. This is an agricultural area and has a vibrant Latino community. However, the healthcare system in this area, despite having two hospital systems, is not excellent at supporting our monolingual Spanish speakers adequately. While La Clinica has worked very diligently for more than 25 years to provide access to high quality primary care to our patients, it is still common practice that patients can not make appointments or see specialists due to language barriers. We lack regional services for mental health and addiction treatment in Spanish. Our patients often delay care and suffer higher consequences and costs due to these barriers.

Because we in Oregon are committed to health equity for all Oregonians, it is time to examine how that is going for our Latino residents. The health of the one impacts the health of the whole, as we painfully re-learned during the COVID-19 pandemic. One of the best ways to support health is to provide a healthcare workforce that reflects the cultures served. I have particular interest and passion in developing pipelines to enhance this. For twelve years, I had a front-row seat observing how training programs like UCLA Harbor created pipelines that turned their pediatric patients into their own residency program directors; how the Song-Brown Commission funded the delivery of care to underserved populations in a culturally responsive way; how difficult it was for our primary care departments to recruit and retain a diverse healthcare workforce within healthcare systems that did not reflect or support diversity as hoped. During the next four years, I perceive a high risk of de-emphasis on support for diversity at the federal level. In response, we need to act at the state and local levels to promote and preserve high quality care for all patients. Establishing a Latino Health System Task Force is an excellent step toward exploring and employing the most effective strategies to enhance the delivery of care for all.

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