



Oregon Pediatric Society

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

Dear Chair Patterson, Vice Chair Hayden and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Oregon Pediatric Society¹, I am writing in support of SB 1570, the Healthcare without Fear Act.

As pediatric providers, we provide essential care for the youngest and most vulnerable populations across the state, from well-child and specialty pediatric care to urgent and emergent care. Our children and youth, and their families and caregivers, rely on us to support them to ensure that every child can achieve optimal health.

Recent escalation in immigration enforcement in our communities has forced families to delay or forgo preventative and sick visits due to fear and lack of safety in healthcare settings. We are seeing increased rates of no shows and appointment cancellations, as families who are hesitant to bring their children for care due to fear of being questioned or detained by immigration enforcement. In recent weeks, we saw what many feared would happen when the Campos family was detained while seeking emergency medical care for their ill child.

This fear impacts not only immigrant families, but families from many backgrounds across communities throughout the state. While the immediate chilling impacts on healthcare access are evident, we fear the long-term health harms related to these delays in care, and the impacts these will have on children's ability to grow, develop and attend school.

SB 1570 effectively responds to calls from our patients and their families, as well as our colleagues, across the healthcare community to ensure that healthcare facilities are safe spaces, free of intimidation or fear of arrest. The bill upholds the right for patient privacy in healthcare, designates clinical spaces as safe so that timely and appropriate medical care can be administered without hinderance, and provides clarity for the rights of patients and providers.

There are currently no established standards regulating the presence and activity of immigration enforcement agents in healthcare settings. SB 1570 provides urgently needed clarity regarding limitations on federal immigration enforcement in hospitals and clinics and requires health care facilities to establish consistent policies and procedures for responding when federal immigration authorities arrive. This will allow pediatric providers, nurses and other medical staff to focus on building trust and providing compassionate and patient-centered healthcare to all children and their families during this unprecedented time of fear and uncertainty.

We urge you to pass SB 1570 to codify the right to safety in healthcare spaces for all.

Sincerely,

Kelly E. Coates, PhD, MPH
Executive Director
Oregon Pediatric Society

¹ The Oregon Pediatric Society is the Oregon chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics and represents more than 700 pediatric providers caring for infants, children and adolescents across our state.