



NORTHWEST HEALTH  
FOUNDATION

September 6, 2017

Joint Committee on Referendum 301

Chair Devlin, Chair Rayfield, members of the committee:

On behalf of Northwest Health Foundation, thank you for the chance to join you today to talk about Referendum 301.

From our founding board president Senator Mark Hatfield, to myself, the current board president Vanetta Abdellatif, our foundation's commitment to advancing healthcare access for everyone in our region has been steadfast. Since our beginning in 1997, we've seen access expand to ensure nearly everyone in Oregon has the health insurance and the care they deserve. We are honored to have played a small part in achieving this goal. And with the healthcare coverage of one in four Oregonians on the line, Referendum 301 reminds us just how fragile this achievement is.

Our foundation's mission is to advance the health of the *people* of Oregon and Southwest Washington. And it is people who are at the center of Referendum 301. Our foundation has not yet taken a position on this issue, but we recognize that Oregonians—our family, friends and neighbors—are at the core of what's at stake. That's why I'm here to comment today on the draft ballot title that this committee has proposed.

We appreciate the work gone into drafting this title. We know the task before you is a big one. And we believe that this title may fall short in letting voters know the impact that such drastic cuts to Medicaid funding will have to the daily and lifelong health of the people whose good health our foundation was created to advance.

The healthcare of 375,000 Oregonians are at stake. The potential loss of hundreds of millions in state funds and billions in federal dollars that the provider assessment secures translates into real hurt, real pain, and real consequences for so many of us.

Without these funds, we face painful decisions about who keeps and who loses coverage. And we should be up front with voters that we'd face such painful decisions—and that lives are at stake.

On behalf of our board, staff and community partners, we appreciate the opportunity to share our perspective and we thank you for your commitment to the health of every Oregonian.