



The Wallace Medical Concern

February 17, 2017

Dear Chair Monnes-Anderson, Co-Chairs, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of The Wallace Medical Concern, I respectfully request your support for Cover All Kids, SB 558.

The Wallace Medical Concern is a non-profit, Federally Qualified Health Center that provides a complete, welcoming health home to Rockwood and East Multnomah County residents facing barriers to care. We have special FQHC designation as a health care provider for the homeless and residents of public housing, and are a State of Oregon Tier 3 Patient-Centered Primary Care Home.

Every day we see the significant health disparities so many children and families face—such as high rates of diabetes and low child immunization rates. Our holistic approach, made specifically relevant for differing populations, engages families in their own care and includes education, support and resources to improve health. We deliver comprehensive primary, urgent and dental care at our Rockwood campus—and primary and urgent care at our Gresham Clinic and Mobile Medical Clinic. Other services include fully integrated behavioral and mental health care, as well as supports to address cultural, linguistic and financial barriers.

Every child deserves a healthy start in life. Health insurance coverage is one of the single most effective ways to ensure that children receive the preventative health and medical care they need to thrive in school and life. In Oregon, 2 percent of low-income children do not have any medical coverage. SB 558 extends Oregon's Healthy Kids program to all children residing in Oregon, ensuring that all kids have access to the health care services they need and deserve. The bill also guarantees culturally competent outreach to children and their families.

Community health centers like ours provide primary care to thousands of the children that Cover All Kids would help, and will continue to do so. This is a core part of the mission of community health centers – accepting all patients regardless of insurance status or ability to pay. But these children need full coverage just like other children in our state. Without it, many families hesitate to seek care and children may not have access to a range of health providers and services. And without coverage, children who live in areas without a community health center might not have access at all. By covering all children in Oregon, health centers will be able to redeploy limited federal resources to reach deeper into rural and underserved communities to deliver more care for the remaining uninsured and underinsured in our state.

The future of healthy and thriving children depends on timely and preventative health care. Access to health coverage results in lower high school dropout rates and an increase in college attendance and completion. SB 558 helps ensure that on day one of school all children come into class healthy and ready to learn. Please join us in support of Cover All Kids.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Lisa A. Cline'.

Lisa A. Cline, MPH
Chief Executive Officer