

OREGON'S HEALTH CARE SAFETY NET

A part of the solution!

The health care safety net is a key delivery system element for the protection of the health of Oregonians and the delivery of community-based care.

ELEVATOR SPEECH:

- **What** is the “health care safety net?”
- **Why** is it important?
- **How** does it benefit your community?

We serve the most vulnerable neighbors that you see everyday in your community, for example:

- The homeless youth living on the street, fleeing an abusive family situation
- The retired widow who is living on her \$900 social security check
- The Eastern-Oregon farmer who lives 10 miles from his closest neighbor and 40 miles from the closest medical facility
- The pregnant migrant farm worker or refugee, who doesn't speak English and is unable to get the prenatal care she needs
- The waitress whose employer is unable to provide health insurance, for her or for her children.

Safety net providers focus significant resources and have expertise in serving people experiencing barriers to care.

Safety net providers are on the ground in underserved communities providing oral, mental, behavioral and physical health services for patients who are at-risk of not getting needed healthcare.

In many cases, these patients are unable to pay for the cost of their care and as a result, safety net providers must rely on a diverse array of funding streams to support their work. This patchwork of funding often leaves safety net providers financially vulnerable during economic downturns – when they are needed most.

Safety net providers are leaders in helping people overcome barriers and experience better health outcomes.

What happens when a safety net provider disappears?

- More patients seek care at our emergency departments
 - More individuals are incarcerated
 - Costs increase to the entire community
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