

Immigrant & Refugee Community Organization

10301 NE Glisan Street, Portland, OR 97220

www.irco.org



March 3, 2025

My name is Lee Po Cha, and I am the Executive Director of the Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization (IRCO). I have been with IRCO for over 40 years, and have served in a variety leadership roles to advocate for diverse communities, including as a member of A Home for Everyone's Board, past president of the All Hands Raised Board, past president of the Hmong American Community of Oregon (HACO), and co-founder of the Coalition of Communities of Color.

IRCO has been serving the community for nearly 50 years, with a focus on supporting refugee, immigrant, vulnerable populations. We are involved in a wide range of services, including economic, workforce, legal services, human trafficking prevention, preschool, and early childhood development. Our health-related programs also have a long history. We have applied and qualified for the Medicaid waiver, and we have partnered with the OHSU Intercultural Psychiatric Program, which provides culturally sensitive mental health services to immigrant and refugee communities.

I am writing today to express my strong support for the proposed integration of OHSU and Legacy. I believe this integration has the potential to improve healthcare access and equity for the communities IRCO serves. Healthcare and public health issues are very important to these communities, and I believe that the intention of the merger is to build a healthier future for all the people of Oregon.

As a combined system, I trust that OHSU and Legacy will be better able to bridge the gaps in services that our immigrant communities currently face. Language services are crucial for our community, and it is important to maintain connectivity and ensure that these services are strengthened and expanded through the integration. We also need to remember the importance of the human touch in healthcare, which goes beyond just technology.

I am encouraged that OHSU and Legacy are considering health equity policy and implementation in their plans for the integrated system. It is important to create a system that is thoughtful about meeting the needs of underserved populations, including expanding access regardless of income.

I appreciate the ongoing dialogue and transparency surrounding this integration, and I hope that the connection between OHSU, Legacy, and IRCO will be maintained.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Lee Po Cha
Executive Director,
Immigrant and Refugee Community
Organization (IRCO)