

January 7, 2021

Health Policy and Analytics Medicaid Waiver Renewal Team
Attn: Michelle Hatfield
500 Summer St. NE, E65
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Ms. Hatfield:

Re: Comments in Support of Medicaid 1115 Demonstration Application

[Shift Health Accelerator](#) (“Shift”) supports the Medicaid 1115 Demonstration Application and, specifically, the requirement that coordinated care organizations (CCOs) allocate 1% of their global budgets to be directly administered by community investment collaboratives to address ongoing health inequities. Authentic health equity requires that the communities most directly impacted by legacies of racial discrimination, disinvestment, marginalization, and oppression have the power and resources to address the resulting negative consequences. This feature of the proposed 1115(a) demonstration waiver renewal – resulting from a long process of collaboration with regional health equity coalitions – goes beyond community voice and is an important step towards participatory decision making and health justice.

There is a long and unfortunate history of top-down, prescriptive, interventions to address community health issues. At best, these interventions are ineffective. More often, they have proven to be actively harmful, based on uninformed or biased understanding of the upstream causes of health disparities, and focusing on what can be easily measured or replicated rather than on what a community needs. Providing communities with control and resources to address the needs that they identify and prioritize, supporting solutions that they develop and buy into, allows agency, cultural intelligence, empowerment, and true community ownership of solutions.

Shift works explicitly in this space, supporting and uplifting community leaders and we see this effort leading the field nationwide to move toward equity and justice, specifically pertaining to health. We work in and with communities across the country, including in Oregon, and can attest to the imagination, resolve, and power of communities freed to address their health priorities. From our work, we have noticed that there is an active desire by community leaders to be empowered to make their own decisions and apply what they know to be best. Empowering these communities with not only the decision-making power, but also the financial capital is critical.

The proposed Medicaid 1115 Demonstration Application is an important step towards building health equity. It should be supported by Oregon’s leaders, and efforts to weaken the role of community investment collaborative should be opposed.

Sincerely,

Jen Lewis-Walden, Lisa Richardson, Zachary Travis, on behalf of Shift Health Accelerator