

74th OREGON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY - 2007 Regular Session
STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY
House Committee on Elections, Ethics and Rules

MINORITY REPORT
MEASURE: HB 3088 B
CARRIER: Rep. Berger

REVENUE: No revenue impact

FISCAL: Minimal fiscal impact, no statement issued

Action:	Do Pass as Amended and Be Printed Engrossed
Signers on the Report:	Representatives Berger and Esquivel
Prepared By:	Jim Stembridge, Administrator
Meeting Dates:	6/4, 6/6, 6/19

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES: Requires hospitals to provide patients with a written notice explaining the hospitals' policy for charges to uninsured patients.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Hospital incomes and expenditures
- Fairness in hospital billings
- Statistics on hospital costs, usage, charges, and collections trends
- Discounts for insurance companies
- Regulated hospital rates in the state of Maryland
- Current hospital charity levels, hospital charity policies, and availability of those policies to the public
- Residency requirement
- Higher-income people who choose not to have health insurance
- Prohibition against hospitals requiring proof of income
- Current procedures hospitals use to verify eligibility for charity care

EFFECT OF MINORITY AMENDMENT: Requires hospitals to provide patients with a written notice explaining the hospitals' policy for charges to uninsured patients.

BACKGROUND: The cost of hospital care is normally covered, in part, by Medicare, Medicaid, or commercial insurance, with the patient often responsible for co-payments. Uninsured individuals are responsible for all costs. Since hospital care is often expensive, especially for complicated procedures, individuals without insurance incur high out-of-pocket costs, which they often cannot or will not pay. Hospitals typically provide charitable care for people who do not have health insurance or adequate resources. Some hospitals, such as Providence in Portland, have specific policies on the amount an individual will be charged when the patient has a certain percentage of income at the federal poverty level.

According to a 2007 report from the Office of Oregon Health Policy and Research, "Oregon's hospitals are experiencing increasing operating margins, which reflect hospital financial performance based on its primary activity—direct patient care." The report notes that the statewide median operating margin was 2.3 percent in 2003, increasing to 3.1 percent in 2005.

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This summary has not been adopted or officially endorsed by action of the committee.

Committee Services Form – 2007 Regular Session