

**Regence BlueCross BlueShield of Oregon**  
**Testimony regarding SB 122**  
**Before the Senate Committee on Health Care and Human Services**  
**February 12, 2013**

*Authorizes Director of Department of Consumer and Business Services to adopt rules prohibiting or limiting coverage by health benefit plans of items, services, or medical technologies pursuant to guidance by Health Evidence Review Commission*

Regence respectfully opposes SB 122. We want to make it clear we do not oppose evidence-based guidelines or the good work of the Health Evidence Review Commission (HERC).

Regence supports and applies evidence-based medical policies in all our clinical services programs. We applaud the important work of HERC. Its findings are helpful and give us a starting point for our own rigorous process of developing evidence-based treatment and coverage guidelines.

However, we are concerned that using HERC guidelines for health insurance coverage, as written in SB 122, does not meet the gold standard for evidence-based treatment and does not include adequate input from specialty fields. While certainly useful, HERC guidelines should not be a standard relied upon to determine health insurance coverage.

Regence employs experienced staff with advanced degrees in clinical research and interpretation of the scientific literature. They have the expertise to perform critical analysis of the latest scientific literature. The Regence medical directors meet with the medical policy team monthly to address new medical policies and update existing ones. As part of these reviews, we actively seek input from a panel of expert clinicians within our community. Each time we create a new medical policy or consider changing a current policy, we consult with these specialty physicians. Regence also seeks input from the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association Technology Assessment Committee and Medical Policy Committee, nationally recognized in the area of critical scientific literature assessment. And finally, through our clinical services review processes we consider input from clinical experts in the most highly respected academic medical centers in the nation.

Regence's goal is to ensure that our members get the right care in the right setting. We are concerned that "limiting health insurance coverage inconsistent with coverage guidance produced by the Health Authority's Health Evidence Review Commission" will restrict treatment options not only for our members but also for all Oregonians covered under health insurance plans.