



CAROLYN TOMEI
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
DISTRICT 41
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

HB 2329 – Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease Awareness Month
House Health Care Committee
February 6, 2013

Chair Greenlick and members of the committee,

I am State Representative Carolyn Tomei from House District 41, which encompasses Milwaukie, Oak Grove, and parts of Southeast Portland. Thank you for scheduling this bill today.

I have long been committed to public health and have worked for years to keep wellness a focus in our communities.

House Bill 2329 is the beginning of an awareness campaign for patients and policy makers about COPD – or Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease – a largely invisible and very costly disease that is now the third leading cause of death in the United States.

It affects an estimated 200,000 Oregonians.

COPD is a group of progressive, debilitating respiratory conditions that includes emphysema and chronic bronchitis. We used to think of it as a disease that only affects older people with a history of cigarette smoking. We now see more and more diagnoses of women and patients who have never smoked in their lives. Seventy percent of COPD patients are under the age of 65!

State-level data on the prevalence of COPD and associated health care resource use has not been available in all states, until now. For the first time in 2012, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention has released state-by-state data from its annual behavior risk survey that I believe will bring more attention to this debilitating disease.

The truth is that COPD is underdiagnosed and the high cost of treatment is largely due to unnecessary hospitalization. COPD can be prevented, controlled, and perhaps one day cured - but for now, COPD must be on our radar screen if we are to improve the health of our community and lower health care costs.

This is an opportunity for us to start an important public health campaign to control COPD.

There are others here to tell their personal stories, but I, for one, urge you to quickly move to pass HB 2329 out of the Health Care committee and get it on its way.