



MEMORANDUM

To: Chair Mitch Greenlick
Vice Chair Jim Thompson
Members of the Committee

From: Courtni Dresser, Associate Director of Government Relations

Date: February 3, 2014

Re: Support of HB 4085 – Colon Cancer Screening

The Oregon Medical Association supports HB 4085. The American Cancer Society estimates that there will be over 93,000 new cases of colon cancer this year alone. The good news is that more and more people are surviving colon cancer through early detection and treatment, and the US Preventive Health Services Task Force has specific, evidence-based recommendations regarding how that treatment should be delivered.

Expanded access to screening and removal of precancerous polyps is tied directly to the improved survival rate for colorectal cancer, yet because many insurance policies currently distinguish between colonoscopies where no tissue is removed and those where it is, cost remains a barrier to accessing this care for some at-risk patients. For at-risk patients, with a family history of colon cancer or who are 50 years of age or older, it is critical that we remove that barrier.

State and national health reform efforts have emphasized coverage of preventive health measures such as colon cancer screening, yet the access problem remains. Polyp removal during a colonoscopy should be considered preventative. Removing any potential financial burden from the patient will increase access to this life saving screening.

The Oregon Medical Association is an organization of over 7,500 physicians, physician assistants, and medical students organized to serve and support physicians in their efforts to improve the health of Oregonians. Additional information can be found at www.theOMA.org.