

My name is Mike McArthur and I am the Executive Director of the Association of Oregon Counties.

I am here today in strong support of HB 4110 with the –1 amendments. Passage of this bill would eliminate an unfair health care cost-shift from private insurance companies to taxpayers and county governments.

Currently, most health insurance policies include an exclusion for people who are incarcerated. That means, that even though the premium continues to be paid, the insurer will not cover health care costs while the person is incarcerated. This leaves the taxpayers to pick up the costs of medical treatment that would have been paid for by private insurance companies if the services were provided in the community.

HB 4110 with the -1 amendments differs significantly from SB 457 with the -5 amendments from the 2013 session. To be in line with the ACA, we are asking that the exclusion be removed only for inmates who are pre-adjudicated; the ACA clearly draws a distinction between those who have been sentenced and those who are simply awaiting trial.

HB 4110 with the -1 amendments corrects this cost shift by requiring that health insurers continue to pay for health care for these people—whether it is provided in the community or in jail.

This bill includes many of the suggestions offered by a 2013 workgroup that included insurers and advocates and was led by the Senate Health Care Committee staff.

Counties are suffering through tough financial times. Requiring counties to pay for health care for inmates who have private health care coverage—and have not been found guilty of any crime—is neither a good use of taxpayer dollars nor good public policy.

Please support HB 4110 with the -1 amendments to correct this unfair cost shift.