



Testimony in Favor of SB 144
Senate Health Committee
January 30, 2015

Chair Monnes Anderson and Members of the Committee;

My name is Robert Duehmig and I am Deputy Director of the Oregon Office of Rural Health. **I am writing in support of SB 144.** I apologize I will not be present during the hearing on February 4, 2015.

Expanding reimbursement for telemedicine services will increase access to health care throughout Oregon and help address provider access issues in rural Oregon.

SB144 expands the requirements for health benefit plan coverage of telemedical health services by requiring them to provide coverage of telehealth services offered directly from a provider to a patient regardless of where they are. This includes homes, schools and work places.

In order to be eligible for payment a health service must be provided using synchronous two-way interactive videoconferencing.

The services can be delivered to the physical location of the patient receiving the service including but not limited to homes, schools, and workplaces.

A health benefit plan must provide coverage of a health service delivered telemedically if:

- The plan provides coverage of the health service when provided in person by a health professional;
- The health service is medically necessary;
- The health service is determined to be safely and effectively provided using two-way interactive video conferencing according to generally accepted health care practices and standards; and
- The application and technology used to provide the health service meet all standards required by state and federal laws governing the privacy and security of protected health information.

A payer is not required to pay for a service that is not included in the health benefit plan or if the provider who has not contracted with the plan. Additionally, the reimbursement for services provided via two-way interactive videoconferencing is determined by the health benefit plan and the provider and is specified in their contract, NOT set by legislation.

I appreciate your interest in telemedicine and urge your support for SB 144. I would be happy to discuss any impacts this bill may have on rural health care delivery and Oregon's health care reform efforts.