

## TESTIMONY in FAVOR of HB2115

March 6, 2017

Chair Barnhart, members of the committee, I am Dr. Bruce Thomson a recently retired family physician from Corvallis. I speak on behalf of Health Care for All Oregon ([hcao.org](http://hcao.org)) and Mid-Valley Health Care Advocates ([mvhca.org](http://mvhca.org)).

I am here to speak in favor of House Bill 2115.

Community benefit funds are derived from money not paid in federal and state taxes by tax-exempt hospitals. HB 2115 would create legal guidelines for hospitals in the use of community benefit money and allow the public to better observe and influence how hospitals calculate and allot those funds.

Here are examples of need in our region that could be well addressed by better and more transparent use of community benefit money. Two years ago in Corvallis there were four cases of tuberculosis. The Benton County Health Department spent thousands of dollars of its limited budget following up with these patients and those who came in contact with them. In the past 3 months there have been 3 cases of meningitis at OSU. Along with OSU, Benton County Public Health has been coordinating responses to this outbreak including a mass vaccination program to decrease the likelihood of additional cases. This large investment of staff time represents a significant benefit to the community. At the same time it limits other foundational work within public health that seeks to improve overall population health. Two years ago UO also had a meningitis outbreak and Lane county had a similar shortfall of funding to support its foundational programs.

The point is that public tax dollars saved by non-profit hospitals should be commensurate with the community benefit attained. HB 2115 addresses guidelines as to what counts as community benefit and how community benefit is determined. In addition HB 2115 addresses guidelines that create transparency in the fiscal accounting of community benefit.

It is our hope that the additional recommendations that have been submitted will be useful to you. We have forwarded these recommendations to Representative Greenlick.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. I would be happy to answer any questions.