

Oregon Council of Presidents



March 23, 2017

Chair Greenlick, Co-Vice Chairs and Members of the Health Care Committee:

Universities are tasked with the responsibility of creating campus environments where students can thrive, academically, socially and personally. Health and well-being are central to student success, and campus health services are uniquely positioned to support students – many of whom will be at higher risk of certain diseases given group living situations and the opportunity for close contact with other students. Many campus health centers, in partnership with county and state health officials, have developed effective protocols for managing large-scale public health needs, including responding to infectious disease outbreaks. The recent experiences with meningococcal disease outbreaks at University of Oregon and Oregon State University have illuminated a major barrier in protecting students: managing out-of-network insurance claims.

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommends wide-scale insurance coverage of meningococcal B vaccine in the event of an outbreak; however, these benefits are hindered by insurance companies (and other health benefit systems) denying claims for services provided from out-of-network providers. Student health centers are not typically contracted with insurance companies, so students receiving vaccines provided by the university may be subject to out-of-pocket expenses unless they find an external provider or return to their home clinician. Students are extremely busy and highly sensitive to both time and cost – losing access to convenient, cost-effective care, plus the threat of out-of-pocket medical costs are very real deterrents. Health centers are left expending considerable resources to clear these barriers, including contracting with external providers for mass vaccination efforts and otherwise negotiating with individual plans to allow coverage.

HB 3276 would greatly reduce these challenges for universities and allow college health centers and their community health partners do what they do best: provide essential infectious disease response to at-risk college populations. This is of particular importance in the event of public health outbreaks.

Sincerely,

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