

To me, the following information beneath the video of Tracy's story helps in understanding it, and relates it well to SB 1046 - *"Tracy MacEwan, a former teacher and now artist, could not afford health insurance or qualify for Medicaid. He did not know he had high blood pressure and had a hemorrhagic cerebellar stroke. He was life-flighted from Lincoln City, Oregon, to OHSU in Portland, and remained semiconscious for 27 days. Had Tracy been able to afford medical attention before his stroke his blood pressure could have been effectively controlled with medicine costing less than 50 cents a day." [With a universal system in Oregon, such attention and control would have been likely.]*

Chair Monnes Anderson and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 1046. I am Tracy MacEwan from Lincoln City on the coast

I had my stroke at the gym. I was about halfway through and felt sickly, but nothing too profound. I didn't want to be sick in front of anybody, so I retired to be by myself in the bathroom stall. Thankfully at first, but I wonder now, I didn't have any pain. Perhaps pain might accompany thoughts that something was very wrong. I remained in the bathroom for perhaps an hour and a half before trying to marshal my energy and make my way to the front door. It wasn't that busy, so all I had to do was try and avoid one of the owners, Sylki, and my intention was to drive home about a mile from the gym. She stopped me right away. She called 911 right away. She was onto me. If she hadn't stopped me, the speculation is that I would have died. Most people do. Again, I didn't have any pain. So my usual thoughts were interrupted, and pain which might have indicated something more profound. If I had realized that I might be having a stroke, I would have been much more inclined to try and do something quickly. This was in June of 2011.

I remember seeing my good friends Kelly and Faith at the hospital. Kelly would later confide in me that I was trying to speak, but obviously was having a great deal of difficulty. I knew that I was a candidate for trying to be good to myself, because I couldn't afford health insurance. So I walked five or six days a week, and about three to five miles on a somewhat regular basis. I usually went to the gym about three times a week, and had done so for several years. I had a healthy lifestyle, but I had undiagnosed high blood pressure. It is referred to as the silent killer, and now I understand this. I was lucky. My sister was wonderful beyond words and wrote a book about her experience caring for me after my event. My friends were remarkable. I remained mostly in a drug-induced coma for 27 days at OHSU.

Today I continue to get better. I remember asking my physical therapist about three years into this episode, was I wrong to experience feeling better this late? (I was told that I would recover health-wise, what I might expect to achieve in the first six months) She being a doctor herself, said 'What the hell do doctors know anyway?' It's difficult to explain, but when one is learning to speak, you grasp words and struggle to say them, but this process couples the thinking with the physical.

I find the brain remarkable. I have learned a keyword Neuro-plasticity. The brain creates new pathways to accomplish what it did before. I had an additional challenge to learn the physical

aspect regarding speech in terms of forming words, but also the mental aspect of what I wanted to say. The mental aspect continues today.

If I had been able to afford health care, this might not have happened. I would have benefited profoundly from affordable health care.

Tracy MacEwan
1235 SW Fleet Ave.
Lincoln City, OR 97367