



June 30, 2017

Representative Jennifer Williamson, Chair
Members of the House Rules Committee
900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Dear Chair Williamson and Representatives,

As children's advocates, we are concerned that if an attempt to refer the new provider assessment to voters is successful, then nearly 300,000 children in Oregon could have their access to health care through the Oregon Health Plan be jeopardized while awaiting an election.

The provider assessment had the support of insurance carriers, CCOs, and health providers from around the state because they understand the need for access to health care services and a stable health insurance market. The health professionals agreed to tax themselves to fill the gap in the state's Medicaid funding, so that those most in need would have continuous coverage and health care.

Should the repeal of this assessment, supported by health professionals and legislators, qualify for the ballot, these funds would be frozen until the election. The provider assessment would no longer be collected creating a growing hole in the budget dedicated to funding health care coverage for low-income children and families. The health care for hundreds of thousands of Oregonians would be at risk during what could be a year until the next general election.

Fortunately, the –A7 amendment to SB 229 would minimize this uncertainty for families by moving the possible election from November to January. This will reduce the time children's health care could be disrupted, while they wait for voters to decide the fate of the measure.

SB 229 –A7 is a simple amendment that will abbreviate the timeline so that we can use these important funds to honor our values, respect the commitment of health professionals and legislators, and protect the most vulnerable Oregonians.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elizabeth Cushwa". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Elizabeth Cushwa
Strategic Director