

Chair Greenlick and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HRJ 203. My name is Michael Huntington, a retired radiation oncologist from Corvallis, and I am supporting HJR 203 because I feel strongly that people should not have to forego the care they need because they fear losing their savings or their homes.

As a radiation oncologist I loved helping people through rough times and using the latest in technology to cure or alleviate cancer. But what made me particularly sad was having patients come to us with advanced cancers after suffering symptoms but avoiding medical care for months or years because they could not afford or qualify for insurance or health care. I found out that most other developed countries did not let this happen to their people.

A middle-aged man with teenage children was overheard talking with his wife at the cancer center. He said, "Honey, they tell me I have stage II lung cancer and that I need radiation therapy and chemotherapy. My cancer might respond well to the treatment but they give me no guarantees. I don't want to leave you and the kids bankrupt or homeless."

You may recall Tracy McEwan from Lincoln City, who testified before this committee last year. He had a severe stroke caused by undiagnosed high blood pressure. His income had been too high for Medicaid but too low for private insurance. The draining of his finances in the first month of care qualified him, belatedly, for Medicaid. Five years of rehabilitation costing Medicaid and Medicare over \$400,000 have allowed Tracy to now speak haltingly and return to his painting. His stroke could have been prevented by a 38 cent pill each day.

I encourage you to support the HOPE amendment to prevent the unnecessary suffering told in these stories. Many other compelling stories are posted on the Health Care for All Oregon website (HCAO.org) under the RESOURCES tab.



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