

My name is Wes Brain and I am from Ashland, Oregon. I have resided in southern Oregon for 62 of my 68 years. I very much appreciate the members of the Task Force on Universal Health Care volunteering to do this essential and historical work to bring health equity to all residing in Oregon. The "Purposes" to which all of you have committed could not have been better during this time of crisis:

- (1) Improving the health status of individuals, families, and communities;
- (2) Defending against threats to the health of the residents of this state;
- (3) Protecting individuals from the financial consequences of ill health;
- (4) Providing equitable access to person-centered care;
- (5) Removing cost as a barrier to accessing health care;
- (6) Removing any financial incentive for a health care practitioner to provide care to one patient rather than another;
- (7) Making it possible for individuals to participate in decisions affecting their health and the health system;
- (8) Establishing measurable health care goals and guidelines that align with other state and federal health standards; and
- (9) Promoting continuous quality improvement and fostering inter-organizational collaboration.

My Personal Story

I have had several healthcare challenges in my immediate family which display Oregon's inhumane healthcare system. Here is the one that changed my life. In January, 2009 my daughter Tanya Wray died after a nearly 9 year struggle with leukemia. Tanya's struggle with leukemia was eclipsed by personal trials and tribulations as she and her doctor's were thwarted with countless hoops to jump through to get the care she needed when she needed it. It was Senator Lenn Hannon at the time who went to bat for Tanya. The system said she should go to Mercy Hospital up in Seattle for her bone marrow transplant. We had to fight to get this done at OHSU. You see when you have a bone marrow transplant you must then live within 10 minutes of the hospital for 30 days to get necessary acute care if needed. The costs and distance of Mercy Hospital in Seattle vs. OHSU in Portland were a substantial hardship. Now follow this, Tanya and her young husband Bryan had their lives completely disrupted. And it took the help of Sen. Hannon who intervened so that Tanya was able to get the transplant at OHSU.

It was in early 2000 when Tanya got the leukemia diagnosis, missed initially as her symptom initially was extreme fatigue that slowed her down. At the time Tanya was a grants writer working in the Medford, Oregon's Mayor Office to provide the services of her BS degree at Southern Oregon University. Not long out of college, the year before Tanya Wray wrote the grant for Access Food Shares which secured a food kitchen so that restaurants in Medford would no longer toss food uneaten at the end of the day. This helped feed seniors and the Meals on Wheels programs. Tanya did this!

While working for Medford Tanya "hit a speed bump" (her words for describing the newest challenges in her young life). Getting care for leukemia was a challenge every single step of the way... Tanya needed to immediately quit her job with Medford and the next day spent almost a month in Rogue Valley Hospital now called Asanti. This was the start of the struggle that was so inhumane. As often happens the costs of care led to bankruptcy for the young couple yet it was the constant hounding of bill collectors who raised the stress and confusion

for my sick daughter. Nobody should ever be treated like this, ever! We are better than this as a state and as a nation.

There are other trials dear Tanya forego in her epic struggle which ended eleven years ago when she died on Jan. 31, 2009. [Here you you can read the hardest thing I ever wrote in my life. No writing class ever taken in high school or college prepares a parent to write their child's obituary.](#)

Wray, Tanya Heidi



Tanya Heidi Wray

Tanya Heidi Wray passed away peacefully surrounded by her family on January 31, 2009.

"I would like a memorial to be held in Lithia Park. I would like as many flowers as possible and good food for all to enjoy. I would like my friends and family to be reminded to think of me when enjoying a sunny day or smelling a wonderful flower"-Tanya's will.

Tanya was born in Medford, Ore., on March 19, 1973, to parents, Betty Ann Wingler and Edward Wesley Brain, and she grew up in the Rogue Valley. Along with her sister Tasha, she played little league ball, skied on Mt. A and spent time on "Uncle Art's" ocean, Upper Klamath Lake. She moved to Bend and graduated from Bend High School in 1991.

Tanya attended Central Oregon Community College and transferred to Southern Oregon University in Ashland. She was an adventurer not afraid to take risks and explore new places. An anthropologist who graduated with honors from SOU, Tanya spent her junior year in Szeged, Hungary entrenching herself in Eastern European culture. Back at SOU for senior year practicum field work, Tanya and fellow student Matt Goodwin documented an area rich in Native American vision quest sites on Bryant Mountain, southeast of Klamath Falls. She later petitioned for protected status of this cultural landscape.

After graduation, Tanya worked as a grant writer for Access Food Shares in Medford. Spearheading a capital campaign for a new community kitchen, she submitted a grant to the Ford Foundation which brought Southern Oregon a new food kitchen and brought Tanya recognition for her grant writing with a national award from the Grantsmanship Center. Tanya next was employed with the City of Medford where she continued as a grant writer and administered a federal Community Development Block Grant.

Tanya met Brian Wray, fell in love and married him on July 19, 1998. Brian's passion is bicycling and restoring old bikes. He prepared a classic for Tanya and the couple enjoyed the sport "in style". Tanya and Brian loved gardening, visiting the coast, and hiking up Grizzly Peak.

Tanya's was diagnosed with leukemia in 2000. After a bone marrow transplant, she spent

year after year fighting Graft Versus Host Disease. She wrote, "My life goal is to be a good person, to be an active community member and leader. I started to pave that path when I hit a very large speed bump (cancer)."

Tanya became a healthcare reform activist, and in 2005 she traveled to Salem with her father to lobby for healthcare justice. Tanya chaired Oregon Action's healthcare reform committee in Southern Oregon. She also counseled cancer survivors giving encouragement to others who faced similar challenges. Tanya lived a lot!

Tanya is survived by her husband, Brian; stepsons, Riley and Trevor; parents, Wes and Betty; stepmother, Brenda; and her sister, Tasha. She was preceded in death by baby brother, Dustin Wesley Brain.

A community memorial will be held March 22 at 2 p.m. at Pioneer Hall in Lithia Park. A potluck will follow with music by "Broadway Phil & the Shouters"

Donations in memory of Tanya Wray may be made to the following: The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, <http://www.leukemia-lymphoma.org>; Lance Armstrong Foundation, <http://www.livestrong.org>; the SAMFund, <http://www.thesamfund.org> **UPDATED Year 2018—Make donations to Health Care for All Oregon, www.hcao.org**

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Task Force Members: Again, I thank each and every one of you for your commitment. Together we can achieve healthcare justice.

Sincerely,
Wes Brain
Ashland, Oregon