

Written Testimony to the Joint Task Force on Universal Health Care

October 14th, 2020

Submitted by Antonio Germann, MD MPH

Thank you Chair Goldberg and Vice Chair Junkins and members of the Task Force.

First off, a big thank you is in order for all your contributions and time to the important work asked of you in seeking a pathway to universal healthcare via a single payer financing model.

I can't thank you enough for your investment, time and sacrifice.

My name is Tony Germann and I am a rural family doctor practicing in Woodburn and Silverton, Oregon for Yakima Valley Farm Workers Clinic.

Today I speak on behalf of myself as well as a board member for Health Care for All Oregon organization.

My objective today is to draw attention to transparency of the task force. I believe this task force has done an excellent job in creating an open window into the efforts you are making with regard to your information gathering and decision making.

I don't suspect any task force member needs a reminder that government work is and should be scrutinized to the utmost degree. Secondary to the technology utilization during COVID-19 pandemic for these meetings, your work can be readily found on the web and on the Oregon Legislative Information System.

One consideration for the task force is to incorporate public forums or hearings to reach out to the communities of Oregon. My current understanding is that these points of access to comment have not been scheduled at this time. My recommendations are to give consideration to this in future planning via virtual town halls. I am concerned by past lessons of history such as that of the 1990's Clinton administration's Task Force on National Health Care Reform who did not focus on meaningful public input and subsequently faced a tremendous backlash and failure to obtain legislative change.

In quoting SB770 language Section 6 subsection (3) "In developing recommendations to the Legislative Assembly for the plan, the task force shall engage in a public process to solicit public input on the elements of the plan described in subsections (1), (4), (7) and (8) of this section"

And in subsection 3(b): "Solicit public comments statewide while providing to the public evidence-based information developed by the task force about the health care costs of a single payer health care financing system"

I believe it is important for the general public to continue to provide feedback and be aware of your work. The consumer advisory committee will help speak up for the community at large but direct contact with our communities of Oregon, as well, will serve your purpose for passage of universal care in our state.

I will add that, HCAO as a statewide organization with more than 35,000 supporters in the database stands ready to be of assistance in the outreach in support of these efforts for the task force.

Thank you so much for your time and attention.

Antonio Germann, MD MPH