

## **SB 770 Task Force Testimony – Polikoff**

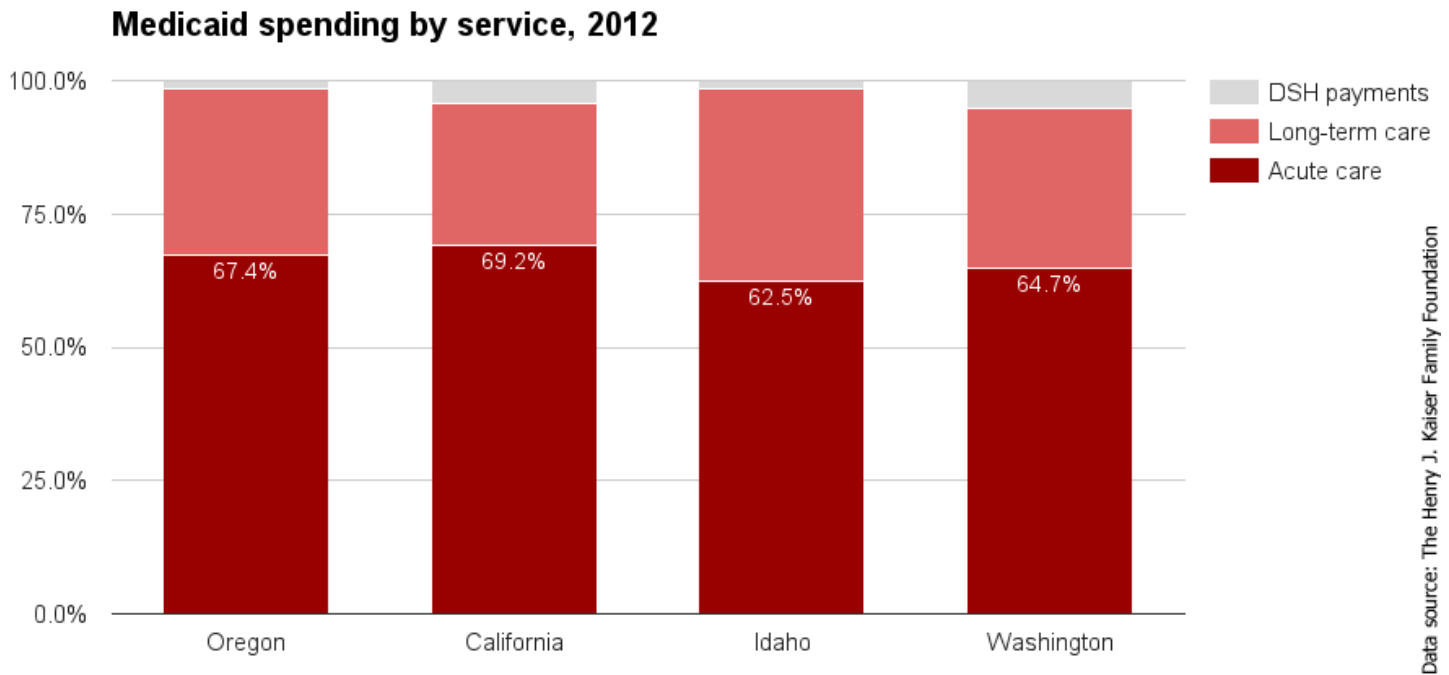
Chair Goldberg, Vice-Chair Junkins, and members of the Task Force;

As a concerned citizen and interim Chair of the Legislative Committee of Mid-Valley Health Care Advocates, I applaud you for your efforts to date in developing a plan to bring Universal Health Care to all Oregonians. It is my fervent wish to see a publicly funded single payer plan brought to fruition as the most beneficial, egalitarian, and cost-effective means to deliver that result.

In following the Task Force proceedings as well as the Finance and Revenue TAG proceedings, I am concerned that an issue has arisen that could potentially delay the delivery of the Task Force report to the Legislature within the timeline established by SB770. That issue is the inclusion of long-term care benefits.

Section 6(e) of SB770 specifies that all benefits currently covered by Medicaid and Medicare shall be included in the system design; that much is quite clear. Since those who qualify for OHP are covered for long-term care, their inclusion is uncontroversial. However, the inclusion of others is open for discussion. The aspirational statement of Section 5(4) in SB770 calls for consideration of “birth to death” coverage of services, which would seem to indicate long-term care for all. However, Section 6(6) allows the Task Force to explore the exclusion of long-term care services.

As seen in the image below, long-term care in Oregon accounts for more than 30% of Medicaid spending:



I have also attached an excerpt from Genworth Financial’s 2020 Cost of Care Survey with respect to Oregon. As seen, the inclusion of long-term care benefits for the non-Medicaid population would substantially raise the revenue requirements for a single-payer system and potentially torpedo any chance of passing Universal Health Care legislation for Oregon.

Much as I would like to see a single, comprehensive plan that includes long-term care for all Oregonians, I would not like to see that threaten the ability to provide a report to the legislature on time and within fiscal reason. Therefore, I ask the Task Force to consider the following suggestion:

- 1) Provide a report to the Legislature that includes all long-term care currently provided through OHP, which satisfies the defined criteria of SB770.
- 2) Once 1) is complete, if enough time and staff resources remain, provide an appendix (or a separate report) that includes long-term care coverage for the general population, and provides the additional revenue/financing requirements.

I believe this course of action would minimize any potential disruption to achieving consensus within the Task Force as well as avoiding the hazard of delayed delivery of the Task Force's work to the Legislature.

I thank you for your time and consideration and for all your efforts to improve the health of Oregonians.

Alex Polikoff  
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Attachment: Genworth Cost of Long-term Care in Oregon.pdf