I am writing to express my concern that our federal and state governments are not doing enough to meet the health emergencies an increasing number of Oregonians are experiencing. The inequities in our health care systems are socially and morally unacceptable. Crises such as the covid pandemic and displacements caused by fire, flooding, etc. put the health and lives of too many people at risk and the costs of these inequities are born directly and indirectly by everyone. We should expect global warming to increase the risks from both pandemics and severe weather. Health care costs, however, do not have to be increasing.

Health care should be treated as a human right. Health care should not be an opportunity for huge private profits. Provision of health care to the entire population should be the goal of public policy. Health insurance is NOT health care and making health insurance more affordable to more people is not the same thing as providing good health care to everyone in our communities.

There is no reason for private financial corporations to be making huge profits from selling health care insurance. If our economy has sufficient funds for financial corporations to make these huge profits, then our economy can certainly afford the costs of universal health care that is based on providing health care rather than insurance policies. When I get sick, I want to go to a doctor or nurse or dentist or pharmacist. I do not want to call an insurance agent or an executive of a large financial corporation.

Benjamin Ben-Baruch
Ashland OR **97520**