

Joint Task Force on Universal Health Care
Legislative Policy and Research Office
Listening Session for the Willamette Valley
Salem OR

Members of the Joint Task Force:

Thank you for holding these listening sessions about proposals for Oregon's Universal Health Care.

As you all know, Oregonians have long supported a system of licensing of healthcare providers through several boards and offices. The process works reasonably well in protecting the public and exhibits transparency. For much of my life health insurance relied only on verification of a valid license for providers. Traditional Medicare still allows patients to choose their providers.

Then many health insurances narrowed this to an **arbitrary provider network**. These networks have **nothing to do with health outcomes**. Rather these networks serve **primarily to delay or deny claims**. Provider networks waste time and money. One institution may house both in network and out-of-network providers, e.g. emergency department physicians at an in-network hospital may be deemed out-of-network providers. This is confusing to patients. The network process further **narrows access to health care**, especially in rural areas, for specialties, is often inadequate for those with disabilities, and severs patient-provider relationships.

I plead with you to **remove processes**, such as provider networks, that have **nothing to do with healthcare outcomes**. It's encouraging that the Task Force addressed participating providers. People should be able to choose among all providers that the State of Oregon has licensed.

Thanks for your work and consideration.

Rose-Ellen Hope