

To: Chair Prusak and the House Committee on Health Care
2/11/2022
Re: HB 4035

I am writing to address the looming issue of Medicaid Redetermination and the attempt to address it with HB 4035. I am a retired Family Nurse Practitioner who struggled on a daily basis with the tragic complexities and inequities of the market-based insurance system of getting access to healthcare when trying to provide care to those I served. I have watched so many patients and their families suffer the consequences of the market.

I currently serve in a volunteer capacity and am writing on behalf of Health Care for All Oregon. We believe access to health care is a fundamental right and complex requirements of getting that access as presented by Jeremy Vandehey, OHA Director of Policy and Analytics, need to go away.

When addressing HB 4035, we write with a reminder that we would not be here addressing this impending issue of 300,000 being dropped from Medicaid or the many other bills if we had a single payer publicly-funded universal health care system. This is the system that polls say Oregonians want, not a system where insurance companies are the gatekeepers to care.

We know this looming problem needs to be addressed. The bill must completely reflect that patients and equity are truly first. We appreciate much about language including references to equity and attempts to reduce the CHURN. We support OHA seeking as many waivers as available in this effort. There are opportunities that this bill presents that we will bring forward to OHA and other committees as this bill moves forward.

In a coming amendment we suggest that both be referenced with the OHBP be given a key role because of its relationship to OHA. In addition, this process needs clear public engagement with those most impacted and that transparency throughout.

In all deliberations and bill drafting there needs to be consideration for the work, recommendations, and the report to come from the legislatively created Joint Task Force on Universal Health Care and those dedicated and capable volunteers. The work speaks to challenges of 4035 and can inform the outcome. You may know that the Joint Task Force on Universal Care and OHA are in the midst of a public engagement process.

We believe that the thousands of single payer advocates, many who are totally stressed by the current system, should be represented in the work ahead and would add to a positive outcome of this process for the health of those residing in Oregon. Because we have now, unlike Wed., seen the first amendment, our position is now neutral to support with the real possibility of full support lurking with further amendments. Which we will be suggesting. The market will never create equity. The market is the failed model.

Done right this could be a step forward that is alignment with the legislatively approved *Purposes, Values and Principles* guiding the important work of the Joint Task Force on Universal Health Care, the design of the system that will come before the legislature in 2023.

HCAO works for an equitable, affordable, comprehensive, high-quality, publicly funded universal health care system serving everyone in Oregon and the United States.



We recognize that this is a looming crisis created by the current system but there is time. The current system is incapable of solving the crisis that it created. Let's take this opportunity to cooperatively advance to equitable and accessible health care and eliminate the pervasive complexities, barriers and administrative waste that have created these health and economic injustices.

We remain hopeful about what could be written in this bill to reflect that access to health care is a fundamental right and reduce the burdens and complexities that weigh so heavily on those needing care. We plan to present further thoughts and suggest amendments.

Again, thank you for the consideration of these comments and for your service.

Sincerely,

Tom Sincic, MSN, Retired FNP
President Health Care for All Oregon
president@hcao.org