

Submitter: Bugas Christine  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: House Committee On Rules  
Measure: HB4035

Dear Chair Smith Warner and Members of the Committee,

I'd like to thank this committee, the Legislature, and all the policymakers who are working to protect and improve access to health care for Oregonians. Though it is still being finalized, House Bill 4035's overarching provisions can make a life-changing, even life-saving, impact on hundreds of thousands of Oregon residents across the state.

Many of these Oregonians are my patients and I see firsthand what they face. Because of the uncontrolled rise in costs for everything that's related to health care, many people, including some of my patients, delay and ration care. This translates to sicker people, people who are less able to work, people who struggle to care for their families, people who seldom live full and rewarding lives. They want to be healthy, they just can't afford good health, and that's fundamentally wrong.

We now have an opportunity to help fix and prevent this.

After the public health emergency ends, 302,000 Medicaid enrollees could lose their coverage. HB 4035 can prevent these huge losses to ensure people retain their coverage, which will undoubtedly be important as COVID-19 and related health care problems won't disappear overnight. By allowing more flexibility on seeking federal waivers for the state, HB 4035 can help Oregon determine the best approach to ensure continuity of coverage and care for residents.

Looking further into the future, HB 4035 can create a bridge program task force to better provide affordable health care and improve coverage for people who go back and forth on enrollment. I urge the Legislature to ensure that such a task force has a diverse makeup that takes into account how Oregonians could best benefit from bridge plan coverage.

I know how difficult navigating the health care system can be even as a physician who is part of it, and ensuring continuity of coverage could do wonders for patients.

Thank you for allowing me to weigh in on HB 4035 and the importance of working toward affordable, quality health care for all Oregonians.

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