

Submitter: Jean Hart
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Health Care
Measure: SB1529

I urge a strong rejection of SB 1529-A. I certainly reject it! While the stated purpose of the bill is to allow volunteer health care providers to administer services during a health care emergency, it is precisely the DEFINITION of health care emergency that is so troubling! That the Public Health Director can simply determine by unspecified methods, and in the absence of accountability to the people of Oregon, that there is a health care emergency, gives far too much power to an unelected bureaucrat. This much power should never be in the hands of someone not directly accountable to the people of the state. Something as simple as an annual outbreak of the flu or "other condition of public health importance" could trigger this determination, allowing the Public Health Director to shut down the state, close down businesses or schools, force mandates, and take away our God-given rights, removing property, medicines, communication, or...?

Could "other condition of public health importance" be interpreted as obesity or diabetes? Therefore the Director can determine that no sugar can be consumed or that we have to log our daily carbohydrate count into our cell phones for monitoring by the Oregon Health Authority. What about smoke inhalation from forest fires? Can he declare that we must wear a mask all summer for that? What about self protection? Can he say we can no longer have a concealed carry weapon? There is no end to the possible interpretations of this definition of "other condition of public health importance."

"(6) If property is taken under the authority granted to the Public Health Director under subsection (2) of this section, the owner of the property is entitled to reasonable compensation from the state." Exactly what property might be taken? Our medicines? Our pepper spray? Our bottle of wine? Our meat? Our vegetables grown in our gardens?

"(4) If the Oregon Health Authority adopts temporary rules to implement subsection (2) of this section, the rules adopted are not subject to the provisions of ORS 183.335 (6)(a). The authority may amend the temporary rules adopted under this subsection as often as is necessary to respond to the public health threat." This removes the 180 day maximum and allows the Director to extend forever the rules he adopts without legislative oversight. This is most egregious!

This bill deserves a very fast trip to the trash heap. Please withdraw your support and vote against this bill!

Sincerely,

Mrs. Jean M. Hart
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