

SB 584 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Health Care

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Sub-Referral To: Joint Committee On Ways and Means

Meeting Dates: 2/8

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Directs the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) to implement and maintain a website for health care providers who participate in the Oregon Health Plan (OHP), providing access to an online scheduling portal for health care interpreters and for processing billing and payments for interpretation services. Specifies a team of twenty-three cross-organizational individuals to design the website. Requires OHA to work with members of the Oregon Council on Health Care Interpreters (OCHCI) and organized labor representatives to review the website and determine readiness for implementation. Requires OHA, once the website is determined to be feasible, to submit to the Governor a request for a legislative measure to make any statutory changes needed to expand access to the website. Directs OHA to apply to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) for approval of a demonstration project to fund direct reimbursement to health care interpreters for services provided to OHP members. Directs OHA to implement a two-year program to provide financial assistance to health care interpreters to improve compensation for interpretation services. Directs OHA to appoint an advisory committee consisting of two representatives from the Oregon Worker Relief Fund and from organized labor to provide recommendations on the application process for financial assistance. Directs OHA to contract with the Oregon Worker Relief Fund to distribute funds through the financial assistance program to health care interpreters. Directs OHA to develop and implement a system to track all state and federal funding spent on providing interpretation services. Establishes civil action for patients and health interpreters if a health care provider fails to work with a health care interpreter when necessary, and if an interpretation company fails to provide an interpreter when requested. Appropriates funding from the general fund. Takes effect on the 91st day following adjournment sine die.

REVENUE: May have revenue impact, but no statement yet issued

FISCAL: May have fiscal impact, but no statement yet issued

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

Requires the use of the health care interpreters portal for OHP providers. Adds language creating the options of establishing a new online portal software or contracting with an existing software program. Adds more specification for the members on the team creating the portal. Requires OHA to make public postings for members to serve on the external partner project team. Allows members to receive compensation for their time, and reimbursement for travel, meals, childcare, and expenses incurred. Adds the inclusion of a representative of health care providers to review the readiness of the website. Allows OHA to seek other federal funds in addition to the CMS demonstration project. Removes all language establishing civil action. Changes the state and federal expenditure tracking to only tracking money spent to reimburse interpreters, and to include tracking for coordinated care organizations expenditures. Prohibits OHA from using collected data for purposes of collective bargaining. Requires the Health Systems Division to work with partners statewide to advance a system of care that include managing the OHP.

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Requires that the Director of the Health Systems Division, who manages the Oregon Health Plan, be an individual with demonstrated proficiency in planning and managing Medicaid, the Children's Health Insurance Program and addictions and mental health programs.

BACKGROUND:

Health care interpreters facilitate communication between health care providers and patients with limited English proficiency and the deaf and hard of hearing. The U.S. Census American Community Survey (ACS) estimates that in the State of Oregon there are 216,654 people who speak English less than very well, about 5.5 percent of the population ([Link to LPRO Map of Oregon LEP Population](#)).

In 2001, the Oregon Council on Health Care Interpreters (OCHCI) was established to ensure the development of competent and accessible language access services. CMS allows states to pursue demonstration concepts to improve services, without increasing costs, for enrollees in medical assistance programs. The measure would require OHA to apply to receive federal financial participation to reimburse health care interpreters for the services they provide to OHP members.

Senate Bill 584 establishes an online portal for health care providers to schedule appointments with health care interpreters and to process billing.