

February 11, 2023

Senator Paterson and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment in support of SB 704.

As you are aware, in 2019, the Oregon legislature created the Joint Task Force on Universal Health Care (Senate Bill 770) and charged it with designing a single-payer health care financing system that is equitable, affordable, and available to all residents; a system that recognizes health care as a fundamental element of a just society.

I was the Chair of that Task Force.

SB 704 outlines the next steps and recommendations of the Task Force.

Sadly, our current health care system is financially unsustainable, harmfully complex, and socially unjust. Health care in Oregon is inequitably delivered. Too many Oregonians, because of their race, age, income, geography, or insurance, endure vastly different health care access, varied health care quality, and wide-ranging health outcomes.

To address that, the Task Force's plan provides a universal set of health care benefits to all Oregonians that includes behavioral, vision, hearing, and dental care. It eliminates the need for premiums and out of pocket costs such as deductibles and co-pays and allows providers to bill only one entity thereby dramatically reducing administrative costs. Under the Task Force's plan Oregonians can seek services from any provider in the state. And by establishing a single payment system it promotes equitable access to care by putting an end to a structurally inequitable payment system in which provider payments were based on the source of payment.

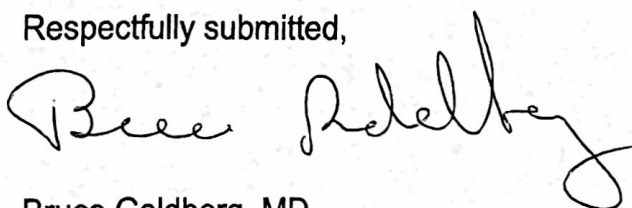
Finally, an independent actuarial firm estimated that the total cost of the plan will be less than our current structure.

Before Oregon would be ready to enact a single-payer plan, significant work remains to detail an implementation plan that addresses such issues as funding, startup costs, transition planning and more.

SB 704 will advance this work by establishing just such an implementation plan to be submitted to the legislative assembly.

I urge your support of SB 704.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bruce Goldberg". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Bruce Goldberg, MD