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Senator Deb Patterson, Chair and Members of the Oregon Senate Health Care Committee
State Capitol, 900 Court St. NE
Salem OR 97301

<https://olis.oregonlegislature.gov/liz/2023R1/Testimony/SHC?meetingDate=2023-02-13-13-00>

Thank you for the opportunity comment on **SB 704** to establish the Universal Health Plan Governance Board. Oregon sorely needs a Universal Health Plan.

One example is drug costs. When I started in pharmacy during the mid-**1960s**, the typical **price of a retail prescription was less than \$3.50**, less than three hours pay at minimum wage of the time. Drugs comprised less than 5% of the budget in hospitals where I worked. **Drug prices related to people's earnings**. No one had drug insurance, or provider networks, both later adding costly administrative burdens.

1977 marked the first blockbuster drug of \$1 billion sales. By 1996 Direct to Consumer Advertising of brand drugs became legal in the US. These situations contributed to rising drug prices.

Today in my retirement, the average prescription price is \$177, annually. For those of us **age 65 and older, drug prices are \$456 out-of-pocket**. A third of Americans can't afford prescriptions because it bears no relationship to their earnings or savings. US drug prices are 150% higher than 32 other countries. Hospitals broke their budgets with nearly 20% price hike for drugs by 2018. One contributor is pervasive drug shortages.

I urge members of the Health Care Committee to **follow the recommendations of the Joint Task Force on Universal Health Care to establish a governance board to complete a full single-payer implementation plan by 2026-2027**.

Thank you for taking my testimony.

Rose-Ellen Hope