

Submitter: Louis Hall  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care  
Measure: SB704

I am writing in support of SB 704 and the establishment of a permanent UHP Governance Board to enact single-payer healthcare for all Oregonians.

Healthcare is a human right, but the current state of healthcare in Oregon is shameful. Employer-based health coverage requires someone be able to work full time, or be in an industry where full time jobs are even available (since many corporations prefer to hire more part-time employees instead, or worse yet, just understaff their businesses with part-time employees). Medicaid being available via OHP is a start, but the income limits mean so many people are forced to stay in poverty just to maintain healthcare, or to go without healthcare so they're able to make their rent.

Not to mention the extreme shortfalls in healthcare via OHP.

I have personally experienced significant medical trauma at the hands of OHP staff, from employees of OHA directly, employees of every CCO available to me in my area, and from the incredibly small pool of providers who are willing to take on OHP patients--because, to my understanding, providers are paid less when they see patients with OHP, so many practices simply have no desire to get in network with any OHP plans. Since moving to Oregon, my life has repeatedly been endangered by OHP's refusal to cover any treatment for my chronic conditions, by providers who had no knowledge of my conditions and did not wish to learn, and by non-medical insurance company employees at OHP CCOs who decided that no, I didn't need that treatment actually, or no, I can't possibly be allergic to this medication that I have a documented allergic reaction to, that no, I cannot have the care I actually need.

So much taxpayer money has been wasted on just me, because the labyrinthine state of healthcare in Oregon has required me to repeatedly see specialists who have nothing to do with my ailments and try medication after medication that do not treat my actual symptoms before I'm allowed to have the treatment I actually need--and that's IF I'm ever allowed the treatment I need.

Our current system is, bluntly put, killing the poor and disabled. It's killing Oregonians. This cannot stand.

We NEED a single-payer system in Oregon. One that does not allow administrators who have never spoken to a patient to decide what healthcare that patient needs. One that doesn't only cover a few select, and often abusive healthcare providers. A

system that can negotiate drug prices down, that will stop wasting money sending patients to doctors they don't need, and which will no longer refuse to cover ANY medical ailment.

We need a system that isn't tied to one's employment, so those who fall on hard times don't have to forego care. A system for those who are too disabled to work full time but not disabled enough for SSDI, whose healthcare costs are high but become monumentally higher if they have lapses in coverage. A system that cares about the health of EVERYONE, which will not put anyone into debt, and which will make Oregon a shining example for other states to follow.

We need a Universal Health Plan, and so we need to establish a Governance Board to get things moving.

We can do this, Oregon. We can be the change we so desperately need.