

Dear Chair Patterson, Vice-Chair Hayden, and members of the Senate Committee on Health Care:

I believe healthcare is a fundamental right for all. Passing Senate Bill 704 to implement Measure 111 will play a critical role in securing that right for all Oregonians and protecting their health. So many serious illnesses could be prevented just by ensuring access to regular check-ups, preventive treatments, and urgent care when needed.

As an immunocompromised senior who has allergies to several antibiotics, I was prescribed Zithromax to treat a chest infection. But my insurance refused to pay the \$200 it cost at the time. My infection grew worse without that treatment and eventually sent me to the hospital with pneumonia. I was left with a bill of over \$7,500 because the insurance company didn't want to pay \$200.

But this is about more than just me. Just think how much safer our society would be if we had enough behavioral health services and alcohol and drug treatment centers, including detox.

Some may say we can't afford to have universal healthcare, but in reality, having it would save us money. It would mean fewer days lost at work and school. If psychiatric and behavioral healthcare were accessible for everyone who needed them, our communities would be safer, too, and wouldn't have to spend as much on emergencies and enforcement.

Let's make Oregon a leader in affordable and equitable healthcare for all. "Everybody in, nobody out". Again, I ask you to please vote "YES" on Senate Bill 704.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely yours,

Layla Assem
East Portland