

Submitter: Kelly Rowan  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Rules  
Measure: SB1089

I write to voice my strong support of SB 1809 and the establishment of a board to enact a universal healthcare system for all Oregonians.

My family teases me about how lucky I am. In 2009 I was diagnosed with scleroderma. Then in 2012, pulmonary emboli in both lungs, then breast cancer in 2018, cataracts in 2019, and osteoporosis in 2020. It was not until 2021 that I turned 65 and qualified for Medicare. So why does my family think I am lucky if any of these conditions could have killed or disabled me? Because I had a job that gave me time off to deal with the symptoms as they appeared, and health insurance that covered most of the costs.

Once I was diagnosed with scleroderma I lived in constant fear I would become too sick to work. Many people with scleroderma lose their ability to work soon after they are diagnosed; and it was not until 2014 that insurance companies were required by the Affordable Care Act (ACA) to provide health insurance without regard to prior conditions. I lived in fear for five years. I was lucky my fear only lasted five years.

Oregonians should not have to rely on luck that their basic health needs will be met. The passage of SB 1809 would bring Oregon one step closer to ensuring that every Oregonian has fair and equitable access to healthcare.