

Submitter: Rick Staggenborg MD
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Rules
Measure: SB1089

I support SB1089, the next logical next step in exploring how to create a universal system of health care in Oregon. With tens of thousands of Oregonians set to lose Medicaid and Medicare facing a potentially existential threat due in part to exploding costs largely attributable to privatization, the choice is quickly becoming one of letting more people die of preventable or treatable medical conditions, or creating publicly funded health systems at the state or national level. Given that Congress has shown no inclination to put people over profits, it will be up to the states to show that it can be done.

It would make no sense to decline funding for the completion of the task of the Universal Health Care Task Force by coming up with a detailed description of how a publicly funded system would operate and be paid for, and how to transition from our current non-system that is quickly becoming economically unsustainable. Having paid for the studies by the Task Force consultant Optamus and the RAND study before it, both of which showed that at worst we can cover everyone at no more cost than Oregonians. Comparing the two, the one done by health care systems specialist Optamus is clearly the more realistic, and found using more realistic assumptions that Oregonians would save nearly a billion dollars in the first year of operation of the Oregon Universal Health Plan.

Leaving the work of the Task Force unfinished, with so much at stake for taxpayers and patients, would be not only fiscally irresponsible, but immoral.