

Submitter: Betsy Zucker
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Rules
Measure: SB1089

As a longtime nurse practitioner, now retired, I am writing in strong support of a universal, publicly funded health care system for all Oregonians. Please pass SB 1089.

With the passage and implementation of SB 1089, and adequate funding for its work, we will empower a Governance Board to develop such a system for our state.

We are all familiar with the problems of our current patchwork public/private system for financing health care. It is overly expensive, administratively unwieldy and wasteful, and ultimately unsustainable. It breeds severe health inequities by race and ethnicity - a moral outrage in the 21st century. Although most Oregonians have health insurance, some don't. And even more are under-insured: they have such skimpy insurance that it is too expensive to use.

The only solution which will provide universal health care, and do it in an equitable, efficient and cost-effective way is a true single payer plan: one risk pool, one set of benefits for everyone. Dozens of research studies, and the results of our own Task Force on Universal Health Care confirm this: a single payer financing plan will save money, while providing equitable care for all Oregonians.

Over the years, I have watched patients, friends and family members defer necessary care, skip needed medications, or ignore concerning symptoms - all because of concern over the cost (or possible cost!) of medical care or prescription drugs. Not long ago, a friend with chest pain delayed going to the emergency room for several days, worried about whether his care would be covered -- and was then diagnosed with a heart attack.

The current system creates unnecessary worry, anxiety, and financial hardship for Oregonians - without leading to improved health. It breaks my heart to see this, in the richest country on earth.

Let's pass SB 1089, as the next step in designing a single payer health care system with equity and affordability at its core. Everybody in, nobody out!