



Legislative Fiscal Office
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Bill Title: Relating to health care interpreters; prescribing an effective date.

Government Unit(s) Affected: Oregon Health Authority, Department of Human Services

Summary of Fiscal Impact

Costs related to the measure for the Oregon Health Authority are indeterminate at this time - see explanatory analysis.

Measure Description

The measure directs the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) to establish and maintain a health care interpreter management system to improve access for Oregon Health Plan members. The health care interpreter management system must allow online scheduling of health care interpreters for health care providers and coordinated care organizations and process billing and payments for services rendered. The measure permits OHA to purchase a software program, if available, for the health care interpreter management system to avoid creating a new software program.

OHA is also directed to contract with a nonprofit entity to develop and administer a health care interpreter recruitment and retention program. The minimum responsibilities required of the nonprofit entity are:

- Contacting health care interpreters to fill empty appointment slots and last-minute cancellations by scheduling through the health care interpreter management system established and maintained by OHA.
- Providing information on qualifications and certification standards.
- Informing health care interpreters of training and professional development opportunities.
- Reporting annually on the amount of money received from OHA that is applied to training and recruitment of health care interpreters, the training and professional development courses provided by the third party, provided or planned outreach and recruitment activities, and the fill rate of appointments scheduled through the health care interpreter management system.

The measure requires OHA to take necessary steps to receive federal financial participation in costs for reimbursement of health interpretation services provided to Oregon Health Plan members by January 1, 2025.

Fiscal Analysis

The fiscal impact of the measure is indeterminate due to various factors related to developing and implementing the health care interpreter management system. The key factor related to potential costs is that the measure requires the processing of billing and payments through the system. This will require integration with several existing information technology systems, including the Medicaid Management Information System (MMIS), and the Health Workforce Registry Applicant Portal (HWRA). There are several operational and technical issues identified by OHA that would need to be resolved, including:

- Defining if fee-for-service providers and coordinated care organizations (CCOs) would be required to use the portal for billing and payment, or if CCOs would continue to use existing billing and payment processes.

- Data sharing and data management requirements between the new system and existing systems at OHA.
- Systems interoperability.
- Addressing and mitigating risk regarding dual payments.
- Reporting requirements.

Currently, Medicaid-related claims payments are processed through the MMIS system. Processing these payments outside the MMIS system significantly increases the complexity of system integration and federal reporting and increases the risk of errors in payments and reporting.

While the overall fiscal impact is indeterminate, cost estimates can be made for certain elements of the measure. To review and resolve technical implementation problems and develop a recommended implementation plan, a limited duration IT Project Manager (0.50 FTE) and a limited-duration Information Specialist (0.50 FTE) will need to be established in the Office of Information Services. The 2023-25 cost for these positions is \$151,074 General Fund and \$151,074 Federal Funds expended in the Health Systems Division. Other Funds expenditure limitation of \$302,148 will also need to be established to appropriately budget for these positions in the Shared Services budget structure. It is anticipated that OHA will request any additional resources needed for the development and implementation of the health care interpreter management system following this planning and development period.

The fiscal impact of the contracted retention and recruitment program is estimated to be \$389,200 General Fund and \$369,000 Federal Funds for the 2023-25 biennium. A limited duration Project Manager (0.50) FTE and a limited duration Operations and Policy Analyst (0.50 FTE) will be required to develop the contract scope and deliverables, oversee the request for proposal issuance and evaluation, and provide guidance and point of contact for the contractor. The contract with the nonprofit entity is estimated to be \$260,000 General Fund and \$240,000 Federal Funds. Position costs, including personal services and services and supplies, are estimated to be \$129,200 General Fund and \$129,200 Federal Funds for the 2023-25 biennium.

Relevant Dates

The measure takes effect on the 91st day after sine die.