



March 13, 2025

RE: Senate Committee on Health Care Hearing on SB 539

Dear Chair Patterson and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony **in support of SB 539**, which protects Oregonians from surprise hospital facility fees. My name is Michelle Druce and I am the executive director of the Oregon Consumer League. For over 58 years, the Oregon Consumer League has worked to protect Oregonians' rights through education, policy development and advocacy. Our mission includes advancing pro-consumer legislation on the state and national level and defending against policies that harm Oregon consumers.

Oregon families are struggling and are forced to make hard choices between paying for medical care or other basic needs. Many Oregonians are having a hard time affording healthcare services because of cost, leading them to delay or go without care completely. Black, Hispanic, low-income communities, and women are the hardest hit.

Facility fees are extra charges for receiving services at hospital-owned facilities - including doctor's offices and clinics located off the hospital's main property. These fees can turn simple procedures into major financial expenses and often are not completely covered by insurance.

This bill will:

- Limit facility fees for certain routine services and in outpatient clinics.
- Require advance notice of all facility fees.
- Allow the state to collect data on how, where, and to whom these out-of-pocket fees are being charged.

Eighteen states have successfully passed legislation to protect patients from the burden of these surprise, out of pocket fees. Oregon currently has no limits or standardization for how much a patient can be charged for a facility fee, and unexpected fees can range between \$15 to more than \$1,500. Hospitals also make it confusing to understand why or when these fees are billed, making it difficult for Oregonians to predict or plan for these surprise health care costs.

Oregonians deserve fairness and transparency when dealing with medical debt. If Oregonians are not informed of the costs of medical care, they are less likely to seek the care they need for themselves and their family. Unexpected costs can lead to medical debt and downstream financial hardships, in addition to eroding trust in the healthcare system.

We urge the committee to support SB 539 in order to protect people from hidden facility fees, putting Oregonians above hospital system profits. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Michelle Druce  
Executive Director  
Oregon Consumer League