

Date: April 16, 2025
From: Rosalie Pedroza
To: Members of the Ways and Means Committee
Subject: The state budget

Dear Honorable members of the Ways and Means Committee:

First, I would like you to know I understand how difficult planning a budget is under the current federal funding flux. There are many things I am concerned about, as I'm sure you are, but this is a request to preserve Medicaid funding.

I can't think of any other area that impacts Oregonians as much as cutting this funding. I think back to the days that if you were poor, working one or more jobs but still under or slightly above the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), the only available health care was emergency rooms, the most expensive care there is. Those costs not only impacted the individual's care but also the costs were passed on to everyone. When one had medical coverage they could get preventative care, receiving care before it became so serious it necessitated ER services including hospitalization. Pre-existing conditions further exasperated access to medical insurance, already beyond reach for many Oregonians. Cutting Medicaid funding is penny-wise and pound foolish.

Personally, I retired after 24 years with the state (9 with Ag and 15 with DHS) and 10 years working for Rise Partnership which administers benefits to homecare workers. I do receive a Medicare Advantage Plan through PERS. This year for the first time the premium cost actually cost so much it cut my benefits by around \$100 a month. Prices for every day goods are not coming down so this squeeze makes a bad situation worse but I cannot go without coverage.

Administering benefits to care providers I got to see how many are covered by Medicaid because they don't earn more than the FPL. Another bunch are enrolled in "Obamacare" which is private insurance with help from Medicaid to keep premiums down. The coverage is available for over 20,000 workers although some may have other coverage - private or through Medicare and are ineligible for medical benefits through Rise. These workers care for elderly and disabled individuals in their homes who would be in nursing homes otherwise. They save the state millions of dollars. The individuals they care for also receive assistance from Medicaid.

The bottom line is, as I said at the beginning, there will be a bad outcome for everyone if Medicaid funds are cut. I'm asking for your support to maintain the current level of funding.

Thank you for your time, Rosalie Pedroza