



## Oregon Law Center

WORKING TOGETHER TO ACHIEVE JUSTICE FOR LOW INCOME OREGONIANS

Testimony of John Mullin, Legislative Advocate, 503-867-6236

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Mr. Chair, members of the Committee, my name is John Mullin, and I am a Legislative Advocate for the Oregon Law Center (OLC.) Thank you for the opportunity to talk about the Basic Health Program (BHP).

By way of setting context, I would begin by noting that the work of the legislature precedes, yet dovetails with, the passage of the Affordable Care Act of 2010. We have made progress every session, including Healthy Kids, early concepts of a health insurance exchange, integration of health, mental health, and oral health, establishment of Coordinated Care Organizations, anticipating workload issues, including the value of traditional workers. And there has been progress on health equity, including data and cultural competency bills this session.

While OLC has been very supportive of health care reform here in Oregon, I have testified a number of times about the concerns we have for those just above the 2014 threshold for Medicaid eligibility, 138% of the federal poverty level (FPL), specifically:

- **Affordability** – for those between 138% of the FPL, premiums, co-pays, and out of pocket maximums will be difficult for many individuals and families to afford;
- **Churning** – there will be a number of people who will move back and forth from Medicaid to plans on the Exchange (Cover Oregon) because of change in income;
- **Continuity of Care** – Because Oregon Health Plan Plus is different from the qualified essential benefit plans to be offered by Cover Oregon, benefits will differ. And because plans offered may not have the same provider availability, consumers may have to switch providers.

Today, we would like to talk about a potential solution to these issues – the Basic Health option.

To give a quick overview of our presentation this afternoon, we have our first panel. Following me we have:

- Janet Bauer from the Oregon Center for Public Policy will go over the basics and provide the general framework. Janet and I will be happy to field any questions as we go, as well as after the final presentation.

Our next panel will be:

- Alberto Moreno of the Latino Health Coalition to talk about Basic Health and legal immigrants;
- Arthur Tower of SEIU will talk about the workers they represent, and why affordability is such an important issue.
- ✓ Please note the testimony submitted by Elders in Action. Their testimony raises the profile of Pre Medicare age low income seniors and how Basic Health could be a very important tool to help this vulnerable population. Other documents you should have on OLIS include:
- ✓ Oregon Center for Public Policy's excellent May 4, 2013 Issue Brief on Basic Health;
- ✓ A letter from Allies for a Healthier Oregon, a group a number of us created following the 2012 session. We have been meeting weekly during the session. Please see the testimony submitted by Liz Baxter;
- ✓ Our sign on letter, May 29, 2013, from 27 organizations about our interest to look into the feasibility of a Basic Health Plan option for Oregon.

In conclusion, I hope our discussion today will lead to further action. One suggestion is to invite the Oregon Health Authority and Cover Oregon to present at an interim meeting of the Health Committee.

Thank you for your consideration. And now I would like to turn to Janet Bauer to provide additional detail.

