April 18, 2017

First I want to thank you very much for allowing me to testify today, and participate in this democratic process. My name is Lisa Miyamoto. I am a registered nurse. I currently work at Oregon Health and Sciences University Hospital in women's health, specifically, high risk obstetrics. I am a clinical instructor to nursing students wanting to specialize in obstetrics. In my career I have worked as a medical surgical nurse and interned in a burn unit.

Over the years of providing health care to our community I have seen the ravages and repercussions of our health care systems. I have so many examples of my patients who have not received the care they needed to prevent or treat disease. In turn they have progressively gotten sicker, lost jobs, struggled to provide food and shelter to their children. The amazing thing is some of these stories are about people who had health insurance, but because of deductibles and co-pays, were unable to afford the care they needed to continue to be healthy and productive citizens.

Here are two stories….

A woman had just been laid off a job that had insurance. COBRA was too expensive for her and her son. She had been diagnosed earlier in her life with heart problems, had several surgeries and was on medication to help her heart work as efficiently as possible. In the transition of trying to look for a new job and obtain OHP she was unable to afford the medication that helped keep her heart functioning. Her condition of course worsened. She then found out she was pregnant. This of course put further strain on her heart, and jeopardized the pregnancy. She became unable to care for her other child. She had to move in with family, that already had an overcrowded home. She finally did get care because of the pregnancy, but by then her heart was in failure. The woman had to deliver her baby preterm. The baby had a long stay in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit with complications. Amazingly enough… I have had many patients like this. People with a chronic condition, who lost health insurance or moved from a different state, and while trying to obtain health coverage were unable to afford the care they needed. They then became sicker, unable to work and be productive citizens, lost homes. The list could go on.

Here is a less dramatic situation…

A woman in her 40s, single mother of 2 children with a good job and health insurance. After missing work because of becoming frequently sick, and having shortness of breath and heart palpitations , she went to see her doctor. Lab tests showed she was severely anemic, and had electrolyte imbalances. Heavy menstrual cycles and a previous stomach surgery was the cause. Some iron infusions on a regular basis, labs, and a simple day surgery could solve this. She found out each iron infusion cost $250 after insurance paid. She needed 5 in a two week period to get her body functioning properly again. She would need this series possibly 2 times a year. The surgery was out of the question. After insurance the surgery would have been close to $5000. The sets of labs she needed were $ 600, after insurance. She had to make choices on what to do. She chose the iron infusions. She could not afford the treatment her doctors had recommend, even with her insurance. To make matter more ironic. She worked for a hospital as a nurse. That patient is me. A health professional with a job and health insurance.

I see people on a daily basis not getting the care they need. Their conditions worsen, time lost at work, huge medical bills when they do get care. What amazes me is these are those of us who have health insurance.

Good healthcare for all is always what I have considered part of a civilized developed society. Our nation is one of the most medically advanced nations in the world. yet our citizens with health insurance still can't afford the care they need to continue to be productive citizens. I ask you to please support and vote yes on SB 1046