

To: Oregon House Committee on Health Care
Re: SJR 12 on Behalf of Health Care for All Oregon
Date: May 6, 2021

Greetings Chair Prusak, Vice Chairs Heydan and Salinas, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Tom Sincic, a retired Family Nurse Practitioner, currently serving as President of Health Care for All Oregon.

A constitutional preamble and subsequent amendments that include particular rights establishes a framework under which our governmental bodies develop laws and systems that ensure that right. This has been true with voting rights, disability rights, and the right to a fair trial. The United States Constitution was established to "promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity." Section 1 of the Oregon Constitution relates to the natural inherent rights in people and says that all free governments are "instituted for their (the people) peace, safety and happiness". In 2012, the United Nations passed a resolution on which the United States is signer reaffirming "the right of every human being to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, ... and medical care."

It is clear that the current system of providing care does not recognize "health care access" as a right. Because the fundamental right of access to health care as proposed in SJR 12 is not clearly recognized as part of the general welfare, the blessings of liberty, or the safety and happiness of Oregonians, many people suffer as timely access to proper care is denied or delayed.

Furthermore, many suffer significant stress and/or financial ruin eroding the general welfare, liberty and happiness. Giving Oregonians an opportunity to decide if amending the Constitution to say access to health care is fundamental right ("inherent right") in order to address the "peace, safety, and happiness" of Oregonians as called for in Section 1 of the Oregon Constitution is the right thing for the Oregon Legislature to do.

Now that SJR 12 has passed the Senate, it is time for the House Committee on Health Care to vote to move SJR 12 on for a vote of the House so it can subsequently be subject to a vote of the people. It is time to end this discriminatory system and relieve both patients and providers of the many burdens and related stresses that leave them constantly wondering about their right to the care they need. It is time to give Oregon voters a chance to clearly affirm in the Oregon Constitution that access to healthcare is a right.