

To: the Oregon Senate Committee on Health Care

I am writing to strongly support extending the timeline for the Task Force on Universal Health Care to do its work. The Task Force is charged with bringing a plan under a set of purposes, values and principles as passed by the legislature in SB 770 of 2019 which represent a chance for equity and healthier individuals, families and communities.

I became a Family Nurse Practitioner to provide access to care to those who needed it and improve the lives of individuals, families and communities wherever I worked. This included a housing project on the East Coast, rural east Tennessee, the Saginaw Chippewa Tribe in Michigan, and corrections facilities and school based clinics in Oregon. I did not become a nurse to waste my time with a complex insurance system or helping those I cared for manage the stress of the insurance system. However, I found that as I took care of school aged children and their families I was spending about one-third of my time doing exactly that. Delays in care and denials of care and prescription access were daily occurrences that resulted from asking that terrible but required question, "what is your insurance?"

So now, it is time to relieve both patients and providers of the many burdens and related stresses of this flawed, complex, and toxic insurance based system so we can achieve better care to more people for less money. And we can redirect our resources and energy to finally improving the lives of individuals, families and communities.

The dedicated work of those on the Task Force puts us a path to doing that but they must be allotted the time necessary for the important public engagement so they design a system that Oregonians want.

I ask the Senate Committee on Health Care to pass SB 428.