

Chair Patterson, Vice Chair Linthicum and members of the Committee, My name is Mary Lou Hennrich and I reside in Portland at 7206 SE Salmon St. I am speaking today as a Board Member of Healthcare for All Oregon (HCAO), an advocacy and education organization with more than 125 organizational members and over 35,000 individual supporters and members.

We strongly support passage of SB 428 and thank Senator Manning for introducing this bill, and its historic predecessor SB 770, that are VITAL to the health and future of Oregonians.

SB 428 has only one purpose: it will allow the continuation and successful completion of the essential work currently underway by the Joint Task Force on Universal Healthcare. It will forward the timeline for the Task Force to complete its work and report that work to you and your Oregon Legislative colleagues during the 2022 Legislative Session, rather than the current timeline to report during the current 2021 session.

This work was initiated by the passage of SB 770 in 2019. As you are aware, the Task Force, is led by two outstanding Oregon Healthcare leaders, Drs. Bruce Goldberg and Ed Junkins and is filled with an extraordinary group of voting members who are knowledgeable and experienced health, equity, and justice community leaders from throughout the state. Other legislative and executive branch leaders are also contributing, but non-voting members.

You and we are only too aware of the many impacts the Corona virus pandemic has thrust upon us—ready or not! The impact being addressed by SB 428 is one that delayed beginning the Task Force's work as planned. The confirmation of Task Force Members and then the official first TF meetings were delayed by several months. The meetings have also been required to be virtual and have made it difficult for many interested and potentially impacted Oregonians to interact and give valuable input to members of the Task Force.

Planned for and highly anticipated in person regional meetings to gather consumer input from throughout the state have not been possible. Many of us have become only too familiar with virtual meetings and now have a word forever changed in our lexicon—ZOOM! But, just as we know many students throughout the state have barriers to on-line learning—so do many adult residents who do not have access to the necessary hardware, software and hi-speed internet. We are hopeful that these restrictions on in-person meetings will not be necessary as we move into the fall/winter of 2021 and spring of 2022. Extension of the Task Force timelines established "pre-pandemic" will Oregonians throughout the state to interact with Task Force members, especially in the more distant parts of the state is our hope.

The intent of SB 428 is quite simple. It will allow successful completion of the vital, work, of restructuring Oregon's healthcare system to assure better care, to more people for less cost. If the Task Force has present its final report to the 2021 Legislature, many of the critical details of eligibility, benefits, changes in payment mechanisms, e.g. taxes, and myriad other essential details will not have been completely designed and vetted. Because of circumstances completely out of our control, the original timeline is simply TOO SHORT!

Taking the required BOLD steps needed to redesign our complicated, "house that Jack built" healthcare "system" to assure equity, justice, quality healthcare and ultimately HEALTH to ALL Oregonians needs the time and resources that will be assured by passage of SB 428.

With you, Senator Manning, as a member of this Committee, I feel like I am "preaching to the choir." We THANK YOU for your bold and strategic leadership leading Oregon on the road to becoming the first state to design and implement a just and equitable healthcare system that will bring us "Better care to more people for less cost!" Everybody in--nobody out! Thank you for quickly passing SB 428.