

KEVIN HANWAY

February 10, 2023

To: Senate Committee on Health Care
Re: Support for SB 704 Universal Health Care

Chair Patterson and Committee Members:

I urge you to support SB 704.

This bill was introduced to implement the will of Oregon voters in passing Measure 111 at the last election. That measure amended the Oregon Constitution to establish the right of access to affordable health care for every Oregon resident.

In approving Measure 111 last November, voters recognized the need for a transformation of the health care delivery system in Oregon. SB 704 establishes a Universal Health Plan Governance Board to implement that transformational vision. The bill is based on the report of the Legislature's Joint Task Force on Universal Health Care, delivered to the Legislature last September after an exhaustive 4-year analysis and public engagement process.

We are all familiar with how dysfunctional the current health care delivery system has become. Among the many problems that result from our current system is that:

- It places inequitable burdens on residents. While many Oregonians have excellent medical insurance coverage, there are too many Oregonians who need to access care but too often don't even seek the care they need because they can't afford it.
- The system also creates inequitable burdens on employers. Many employers cannot afford the cost of providing adequate health care benefits for their employees. Employers also suffer through reduced productivity when their employees can't get the medical care they need.

The Joint Task Force report recognized that it will take time to complete the plan for this transformation and then to implement that plan. This bill provides that time – a 4-year schedule – but there is no time to waste.

Please support SB 704.

Sincerely,



Kevin Hanway