

Submitter: Betsy Zucker

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care

Measure: SB704

As a longtime nurse practitioner, now retired, I am writing in strong support of SB 704.

We are all familiar with the problems of our current patchwork public/private system for financing health care. It is overly expensive, administratively unwieldy and wasteful, and ultimately unsustainable. It breeds severe health inequities by race and ethnicity - a moral outrage in the 21st century. Although most Oregonians have health insurance, some don't. And even more are under-insured: they have such skimpy insurance that it is too expensive to use.

Over the years, I have watched patients, friends and family members defer necessary care, skip needed medications, or ignore concerning symptoms - all because of concern over the cost (or possible cost!) of medical care or prescription drugs. Not long ago, a friend with chest pain delayed going to the emergency room for several days, worried about whether his care would be covered -- and was then diagnosed with a heart attack.

The current system creates unnecessary worry, anxiety, and financial hardship for Oregonians - without leading to improved health. It breaks my heart.

The only solution which will provide universal health care, and do it in an equitable, efficient and cost-effective way is a true single payer plan: one risk pool, one set of benefits for everyone. Dozens of research studies, and the results of our own Task Force on Universal Health Care confirm this.

Please pass SB 704, as the next step in designing a single payer system, with equity and affordability at its core. Let's see Oregon take this brave step forward. Everybody in, nobody out!