

To: Chair Deb Patterson, Vice Chair Cedric Hayden and members of the committee
From: Annie Naranjo-Rivera, Nehalem, OR
Re: Healthcare SB 704

Thank you for your time here today. My name is Annie Naranjo-Rivera and I live in Nehalem, OR. I am writing today in support of SB 704 to begin to move forward the recommendations put forward by the Joint Task Force on Universal Healthcare.

I live and work in a small rural community in Tillamook County, woefully underserved when it comes to access to even basic healthcare services. The services that *are* available are not accessible to all. There are so many hardworking people, including members of my own family, who are not able to afford healthcare coverage. For those who are lucky enough to have coverage, it is still inadequate. Every other week there are gofundme fundraisers or spaghetti feeds to help patch together community support to pay for the costs insurance won't cover, or someone's insulin, or an ambulance ride, or an unexpected ER visit. (Ex: As you all may know, my county is home to the deadly and newsworthy Hwy 6, which leads to the Oregon Coast and which frequently has severe motor vehicle crashes, providing plenty of life flight patients. When an accident happens, victims are going through enough trauma, and should not have to navigate archaic healthcare systems or worry about if they will be facing medical bankruptcy.)

Even in regular day-to-day life, we have a significant number of folks who struggle to get the services they need and are drowning in medical debt. Because of the community organizing work that I do, I regularly have conversations with these people from all walks of life: families, the elderly, the working poor, middle class folks, wealthy retired folks, the homeless. I have seen firsthand too many people who cannot afford their daily medications and prescriptions or worry about family members struggling with medical debt.

I have spoken with numerous doctors and nurses who see patients fall through the cracks every day, and are unable to give the care they would like to due to our broken healthcare system. I also find it particularly noteworthy that many small business owners support the move to a universal healthcare system because they are unnecessarily having to shoulder the burden of navigating the healthcare systems on behalf of their employees and paying for runaway healthcare costs. The system we have now is not fiscally responsible.

As a Mom, I am fortunate that my children have healthcare coverage, and that we are able to access care, but the local health clinic is struggling. Many of our friends and neighbors seek care outside of our immediate area or drive into Portland. Clatsop County, to my north, has only ONE dental provider which will accept OHP coverage and there have been times when the waiting list to be seen (even for an urgent matter) was 6-12 months! Columbia County, to my east, does not even have a hospital. We simply must re-prioritize as a state.

The voters have spoken on The Right To Healthcare Measure 111, establishing a state obligation to ensure every Oregon resident has access to cost-effective, clinically appropriate, and affordable healthcare. Access to healthcare is a human right and it is our moral obligation to solve this crisis, to relieve pressure on our communities, our healthcare providers, and our small businesses. Please move this legislation forward with the urgency it requires. Thank you for your time.