

Let's pass SB 704 establishing the governance board for implementing the design laid out by the Task Force to implement comprehensive universal healthcare. When we say comprehensive, we are including vision coverage for the eyes, hearing for the ears and maintenance of the teeth as integral to the health of Oregonians. Blurry vision, poor hearing, rotten teeth and poor mental health are expensive healthcare problems that are often excluded from coverage even for workers and retired seniors who have insurance.

During the week, I was laid off, I was diagnosed with cataracts in both eyes. This was a small and ordinary crisis compared with that of other witnesses today but shocked me nonetheless. How lucky I was to get both eyes fixed while the health insurance was in effect since the next month I had no insurance and the minimum cost of the eye surgeries was about \$12,000 in today's dollars.

As with many Oregonians, the last time I had dental insurance was when I had a full-time job. More than once since then, dental bills have exceeded ten percent of my income. How many of us have had teeth pulled and been unable to pay for a root canal and crown? This, too, is a healthcare concern that deserves our attention.

Poor hearing is a healthcare concern as is poor mental health. A pair of high quality hearing aids runs thousands of dollars. When a person loses his hearing, he is left out of conversation and will often feel isolated. Depression, bipolar and other mental disorders can lead the same and worse and to cascading healthcare challenges.

Let's take seriously all healthcare problems. Everybody in, nobody out. Support SB 704.