

Submitter: Lisa Stiller
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care
Measure: SB704

To the Senate Health Care Committee

On behalf of the Democratic Party of Oregon's Health Care and Public Health Caucus I would like to write in support of SB 704. Any step forward towards achieving universal health care, which covers every person in Oregon, everybody, and leaving nobody out, is one we must take.

You have seen the numbers. About 6% of Oregonians remain uninsured. But along with this about 40% of our population can be considered underinsured, according to November, 2022 an article in the Oregon Capital Chronicle. These figures can also be found on the OHA website. This means they put off getting care, skipped prescribed medication, and/or canceled or skipped medical appointments. As of 2019, 60% of bankruptcy filings were for medical debt. And this wasn't just low income people. Soaring premiums deductibles, and copays (along with rising cost of food, housing utilities, etc) have put accessing medical care a real burden on moderate and middle income Oregonians, including people who do not qualify for any financial support.

We all know that when care is put off, delayed, or simply not sought, it will cost a whole lot more as people get sicker.

Health Care is a Human Right. And by voting to support Measure 111, Oregonians showed up to let us know that they believe this.

We would like to advocate for passing SB 704, using it as another step towards creating a truly equitable, universal plan that is inclusive of all people. We must make sure that every person is covered, without having to put off or skip needed medical care because they cannot afford it.

We can look at the short term; having to spend more money to put a system in place to achieve this goal. Or we can look at the long term, where preventative care, reduced administration costs and bureaucracy, will save the state (and everyone living here) money. Countries with some kind of universal health care have lower per capital costs; in the long run, so will Oregon.

The Oregon Democratic Party has had universal health care, in our state and country, as a priority item for the past several years. The people in the state want this.

The bottom line is that Oregonians believe health care is a human right. Therefore we ask you to support SB 704, and work as efficiently as possible to implement a system that will be equitable for all.

Lisa Stiller, Chair, DPO Health Care and Public Health Caucus

