

February 15, 2023

To: The Senate Committee on Health Care

The following is my personal opinion, not the opinion of the City of Medford. Now that I have had the privilege and opportunity to work in government as an elected official, it has become clearer to me that there are few actions that do more than apply a bandaid to a problem rather than going to the source and enacting a real solution. SB 704 is an opportunity to enact a real solution to not just our healthcare problem but will help other societal issues too.

When the City of Medford staff provided a study session presentation to our council back in April of 2022 on the topic of “Behavioral Health Services in Medford” with part of the presentation focusing on gaps in services, staff said “ease of entry and help with navigation of the system is very much tied to your insurer, your insurance.” As City of Medford staff researched the available services and tried to determine the process necessary for an average resident seeking behavioral health services for a family member, staff found that those providers always asked the same two questions: first, do they want help, but the second was always “**what kind of insurance do they have?**” If we can remove that second question we can effectively remove one of the biggest barriers to providing help to those who seek it.

SB 704 will enable more people to get the healthcare they need, when they need it. This will save not just lives, but is proven to save taxpayer money as well. I could write pages of stories from my life and the lives of everyone I know about how the lack of universal healthcare has impacted us negatively - emotionally, physically, and financially.

I hope Oregon will pass SB 704 and in doing so take the next step toward a healthier and more equitable community for everyone.

Sincerely,  
Sarah Spansail  
City Councilor, Medford