



March 20, 2023

TO: Senate Health Care Committee
FR: Maribeth Guarino, Health Care Advocate, Oregon State Public Interest Research Group (OSPIRG)
RE: In Support of SB 1046 and Standards for Network Adequacy

OSPIRG is a statewide public interest organization representing thousands of Oregonians, and we support SB 1046.

Health care is only as good as a patient's ability to get it, and unfortunately, it can be extremely difficult for patients to get appointments. When patients have wait times to see a doctor, especially specialists, their health and wellbeing are put at risk and could lead to more expensive care down the road if their condition worsens. Some patients may end up in the ER, may be dealing with unmanageable pain, and may need to put other aspects of their lives on hold while they wait for a medical professional to become available to treat them. I have an aunt with MS, and while she was waiting to see a doctor for a diagnosis, she often couldn't manage a visit with her family because it would be too much on top of the pain and stress she was handling on a daily basis.

One woman I spoke to, Meagan, has a disability that has greatly affected her view of the health care system as she fought for a diagnosis. At one point, she had to wait nearly 3 years to see a specialist that could help her. Imagine the stress of dealing with a medical condition for three years before a doctor could see you, treat you, prescribe the medication you need and help you manage your health.

Folks like Meagan don't have many choices - they want to see a doctor, but the system makes it extremely difficult for them to do so. There are various reasons for these wait times, from prior authorization requirements, needing a referral, or because there aren't enough providers in a network to see the patients enrolled in a plan. **SB 1046 would decrease the chance of a patient waiting due to network inadequacies.** It would allow DCBS to evaluate networks based on geographic accessibility as well as the ratio of providers to patients. Perhaps most importantly, it allows DCBS to create limits on wait times for different kinds of care so that patients like Meagan are not stuck on a waitlist.

I urge this committee to pass SB 1046 so that no Oregonian is reduced to a name on a waitlist - they are real people, who need real medical attention, and who deserve better.

Thank you.