

Submitter: David Young
On Behalf Of: Nurses for Single Payer
Committee: Senate Committee On Rules
Measure: SB1089

I am a retired registered nurse with thirty years of experience in the operating room, 24 of those in level one trauma and secretary of the ad-hoc organization Nurses for Single Payer.

Let me recount just one of many ways that Oregon can improve healthcare outcomes for more people and at lower expense.

My operating room experience includes cardio-thoracic surgery, trauma, vascular and more cases. When one does vascular surgery one also does amputations.

A person of limited means notices toe parasthesia, or, numbness in the toe but does not pay much attention to the minor inconvenience. Two days later the tingling turns to pain and he looks at his now black toe and reluctantly goes to an emergency room for which he has no money.

The ER has no choice but to call the vascular surgeon who has no choice but to bring that person to my operating room where we try to amputate as little as possible, just the toe. Frequently that is not enough and a few days later we must also amputate the foot.

Sometimes that is not enough and we now must make the decision whether to amputate above or below the knee. Below is better. It is easier to fit a prosthetic leg. This is all very expensive and unnecessary and a consequence of lack of access to medical care. I since learned that American diabetics have three times the amputation rate that European diabetics do. A major difference between United States healthcare and the Europeans is that we discourage visiting the doctor. In Europe they get in your face if you do not.

I could continue for the rest of the afternoon about how insurance and medical industry imposed bureaucracy and profiteering increases costs with no medical benefit. Please do all that can be done to bring high quality medical care to all Oregonians and a price that we can afford. It is not pie in the sky stuff. It has been done elsewhere. You are in a position to reduce unnecessary and expensive amputations.

Respectfully submitted by David Young, RN (ret.)