



Representative Nancy Nathanson  
 District 13 - H-279

**HB 4136: Access to Care – Response to Eugene Hospital Closure  
 (with -1 amendment)**

***What’s the Issue?***

On August 22nd, Eugene heard the announcement that their only hospital and Emergency Department (ED) would be closing, with 90 days notice. This hospital served as an entry way for immediate access to medical and behavioral health care, emergency and non-emergency. The closure leaves a gap in the community’s access to care. The City of Eugene and Lane County are working to ensure access to care and efficient emergency services dispatch.

The objective is to improve access to immediate health care and tackle fundamental shortcomings of the current system: long wait times in the ED, long wait times to discharge a patient from the ambulance to the ED, and many patients coming to the ED for treatment of non-emergent medical or social care. Contributing to those problems are workforce shortages, and federal and state rules that may get in the way of using best practices to "right-size" response to match the patient's need.

This bill enables innovative programs to try new approaches to bring compassionate, professional, quick care to people and divert them from hospital EDs when appropriate providing experience that can be used in other communities around the state.

***The Proposal***

- **Bridge funding.** One-time funding of \$1.3 million for staffing an additional ambulance crew transporting patients longer distances and waiting to offload patients to a backed up, crowded ED.
- **Innovation Fund.** One-time funding to seed innovative ideas to improve access to same-day care while decreasing long-term systems cost. As “pilot projects” these efforts can lay the groundwork for innovation in other communities in Oregon. Examples of programs include a nurse call service linked to the 9-1-1 system; a Mobile Nurse Practitioner, a 24/7 nurse call line, alternative transportation to non-hospital ED locations, and flexible EMS community response units. Local partners believe that \$3.2 million can establish pilot programs and leverage other funds to stretch the state investment.
- **Provisional licensing for nurses.** Enable employers to hire nurses currently licensed in good standing in another state once they apply for an Oregon license, while their application and credentials are being reviewed for Oregon.



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