

**Testimony Submitted by
Chris Coughlin, Policy Director
Oregon Consumer Justice
To the Senate Committee on Health Care**

January 30, 2025

Regarding: Support for SB 549

Chair Patterson, Vice-Chair Hayden, and Members of the Committee,

For the record, my name is Chris Coughlin. I appreciate the opportunity to testify today on behalf of Oregon Consumer Justice in support of SB 549.

Oregon Consumer Justice (OCJ) envisions a vibrant future where all Oregonians live with dignity and abundance and experience health, joy, and economic opportunity. We work collaboratively across policy and advocacy, community engagement, and the law, to realize a more just and equitable Oregon where people come first. For too long, flawed systems and policies have stood in the way of this reality, with communities of color most often experiencing significant harm. Informed by consumer insights, OCJ works to make financial and business transactions reliably safe and supports Oregonians in knowing and exercising their consumer rights.

Consumers who rely on complex rehabilitation technology (CRT) should be able to receive timely and affordable repairs to items they own, like wheelchairs. This access should not be slowed by arbitrary barriers established by the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) and coordinated care organizations, including Medicaid. Waiting for Medicaid approval can add weeks or even months to the amount of time it takes to repair a mobility device.

SB 549 will allow consumers to seek repairs for their CRTs without requiring prior approval from the OHA and coordinated care organizations. This bill covers CRTs such as medically necessary mobility devices, technology that can only be used by those with a medical need, and technology that can only be serviced by a CRT provider.

Devices include power wheelchairs, adaptive seating systems, strollers, and standing frames, among other necessary medical technology.

Currently, Oregonians living with physical, mental, and developmental disabilities, including seniors and children, are forced to wait weeks or months for even small CRT repairs. Being confined to bed due to a lack of necessary medical technology creates more health problems and limits a person's ability to care for their own needs.

A lack of mobility is a lack of freedom. This means that those unable to easily seek repairs for their CRTs lose not only their mobility but also their autonomy. Many repairs are simple but vital, making denial of access to them an unreasonable barrier for Oregon consumers.

We urge your support of SB 549 so that Oregonians will have access to timely necessary repairs for their CRTs without prohibitive preauthorization requirements.

Thank you for your consideration and your service in building the future that Oregonians deserve.