

March 13, 2025

The Honorable Deb Patterson
Chair, Senate Committee on Health Care
900 Court St NE, S-411
Salem, OR 97301

The Honorable Cedric Hayden
Vice Chair, Senate Committee on Health Care
900 Court St NE, S-315
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Senate Committee on Health Care Public Hearing on SB 539

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

My name is Kari Greene and I am providing testimony in **support of SB 539** offering people like me protections from surprise facility fees. These fees are often assessed as part of routine medical care as I discovered in 2023 when my employee health insurance changed.

My rheumatologist and neurologist are both located in the Providence Professional Plaza **near but not in** the Providence hospital. I was bewildered when I received my rheumatology bill and saw an \$88 "Treatment or Observation Room" charge and the EOB explained the charge was not covered. This was in addition to my \$40 copay.

Let me be clear - my rheumatologist is worth her weight in gold. But \$128 out of pocket seems like a hefty fee for a visit that happens every 3-6 months, especially when it's on top of very costly lab fees. Yes, she is a specialist with incredible knowledge and expertise, but she is working in the doctor's office equivalent of a grey cube farm. There is **no** specialty equipment in the clinic room. Instead, there is crinkly paper on the table, a couple chairs, a blood pressure cuff machine and a handwashing poster on the wall.

In 2024, the fee increased to \$99 then later dropped to \$92. In an additional twist, my neurologist who is located in the same building has never charged these facility fees. Last year, I paid nearly \$4000 in out of pocket health-related expenses. Most of those were not facility fees, but **each additional charge matters**. Sitting in a rheumatology or neurology waiting room, I am surrounded by people juggling complex health issues that require attention, follow up and coordination.

Chasing down nonsense facility fees that make health systems more money without benefiting patients is not where we should be spending our limited time, energy and focus.

I am so grateful Oregon is one of the few states taking this issue of facility fees and surprise billing seriously. Please make system changes to reduce the burden of healthcare costs for everyday Oregonians like me. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Kari Greene, MPH
Portland, OR