

Submitter: Jamie Vaughn
On Behalf Of: Test Those Breasts Inc
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1137

Testimony in Support of SB1137

Submitted by Jamie Vaughn Advocate, Test Those Breasts, Inc. ®?

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

As an advocate with Test Those Breasts, Inc. ®?, I have worked with countless women in Oregon, among other states who have faced significant barriers to accessing the best possible breast reconstruction after mastectomy. SB1137 is critical to ensuring that all women, regardless of their insurance network or geographic location, have access to advanced, muscle-sparing procedures that preserve their strength, function, and quality of life.

Many women in Oregon seeking autologous breast reconstruction, procedures that use their own tissue rather than implants, have had to leave the state because their only local options compromised muscle. Patients who needed DIEP, SGAP, PAP, TDAP, LAP, or hybrid flaps found that Oregon surgeons either did not offer these procedures or imposed strict BMI limitations, making care inaccessible. For those who required DIEP with the SIEA or APEX technique, staying in Oregon would have resulted in a more invasive MS-TRAM procedure, removing muscle and requiring mesh placement, ultimately weakening their core strength and increasing complications.

For women with HMO or EPO insurance plans, the situation is even more dire. While the Women's Health and Cancer Rights Act mandates coverage for breast reconstruction, network restrictions often leave patients with no access to the best surgical techniques. Without the financial flexibility of a PPO plan, these women face an impossible choice: accept a less optimal, muscle-sacrificing procedure or shoulder the overwhelming financial burden of out-of-network surgery. Many have had to endure lengthy insurance battles, multiple denials, and the stressful process of securing single-case agreements, delaying critical treatment and adding unnecessary hardship to an already challenging journey.

Additionally, long wait times within Oregon further exacerbate these challenges. Patients with active cancer are on a tight timeline for surgery, yet delays in accessing reconstruction can leave them in limbo, with limited options and increased emotional distress. Those who are forced to travel out of state often do so at great personal and financial cost, simply because Oregon does not offer the level of care they need.

SB1137 would address these issues by allowing women to seek out-of-network care at in-network rates, ensuring they have access to the most advanced, muscle-preserving reconstruction techniques without financial devastation. This bill is essential for providing women with equitable healthcare, enabling them to make the best medical decisions for their long-term well-being.

On behalf of the many women who have struggled to access the care they deserve, I urge the committee to support SB1137. This legislation would be life-changing for breast cancer patients across Oregon, ensuring they receive the highest standard of care without unnecessary barriers.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Jamie Vaughn
Advocate, Test Those Breasts, Inc.®?