



**DISABILITY  
HEALTH & EMPLOYMENT  
EQUITY COALITION**

**Our Mission** is to make Medicaid, healthcare, and employment equitable for people with disabilities in Oregon.

Committee Chair Nosse, Vice-Chair Javadi, and fellow members of the House Behavioral Health and Healthcare Committee,

The Oregon Disability Health and Employment Equity Coalition (ODHEEC) is a statewide coalition that advocates for issues and programs that affect people with disabilities, workers with disabilities, their families, their providers, and consumers of disability-related services. Coalition partners include the Oregon State Independent Living Council, the Oregon Consumer League, the United Seniors of Oregon, the Oregon State Council for Retired Persons, Disability Rights Oregon, the Oregon State Rehabilitation Council, SEIU, the Oregon Spinal Cord Injury Connection, the Oregon Self Advocates Coalition, and many other groups and individuals.

ODHEEC wants to express our strong support for SB 549-A, which would require the Oregon Health Authority and coordinated care organizations to make determinations on prior authorization requests for the cost to repair complex rehabilitation technology (CRT) for people with disabilities within 72 hours. This would allow for the timely and necessary repair of durable medical equipment and further reduce barriers to their independence.

People with physical and medical disabilities utilizing mobility devices such as wheelchairs and adaptive seating systems must get prior authorization from Medicaid/Oregon Health Authority after a review from coordinated care organizations to approve the cost of even minor repairs of their medically necessary mobility devices. Under current laws and regulations, this process can take weeks to months. Without such authorization, they are prohibited from seeking necessary parts or accessing the software to complete diagnostic maintenance or repair, which can only be done in authorized outlets. These restrictions generally impact individuals with life-affecting physical disabilities who have likely gone through a similar review process to purchase or repair their CRT in the past.

This unnecessary and burdensome hurdle can have a significant impact on the quality and independence of the everyday lives of affected people with disabilities on Medicaid. Under current rules and regulations, approving and repairing a device can take weeks, even months. Around one-fourth of wheelchair repairs end up stranding people with disabilities at home, possibly bedridden, unable to go to work, go shopping, or attend social activities. In certain instances where CRT is highly specialized to an individual's needs, using broken equipment for extended periods can cause unintended serious health complications, resulting in injury or death, which is why the approval and repair process must be streamlined, by swiftly passing SB549, for the safety and well-being of Disabled Oregonian Medicaid Recipients.



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We urge the passage of SB 549-A so that people with disabilities can seek timely repairs to their durable medical equipment without the arbitrary barriers to their independence created by a restrictive prior authorization process.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this most pressing matter.

Respectfully Submitted, on behalf of the Oregon Disability Health & Employment Coalition, by,

**Dr. Jim Davis & John Curtis**

Disability Health & Employment Equity Coalition | Coalition Co-Chairs



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