

April 20, 2017

Memo

To: Oregon State Legislators

From: Health Care for All Oregon

Re: HCAO Support for SB 1046 and Creating a Work Group  
Also Support for HB 2122, 2576, 2387, 2578, SB 558

We are here today to ask you to seize a unique historic moment by supporting the SB 1046 Health Care for All-Oregon bill and by creating a work group to use the results of the RAND study to build a universal health care system in Oregon.

Today, red-shirted Oregonian Health Care for All-Oregon advocates from every corner of the state are rallying on the West Capitol Steps and will be visiting many of you as they surge through the capitol halls.

Health Care for all-Oregon is a coalition of over 120 organizations and endorsed by over 160 statewide business owners. We have more than 20,000 advocates in our statewide database from Astoria to Bend and from Brookings to Joseph. Our mission is to “work for an equitable, affordable, comprehensive, high quality, publicly funded universal health care system serving everyone in Oregon and the United States.”

With more attempts to repeal the Affordable Care Act on the horizon nationally, the U.S. health care system is in a state of crisis. Millions of Americans fear that, in a repeal of the ACA, they will lose health coverage. In the meantime, co-pays, deductibles, drug and premium costs continue to make access to or use of health care unaffordable.

With this crisis in health care we are hearing a loud national call for the real solution to reaching universal health care—an improved and expanded Medicare for All type health care system. [Op eds and commentary in major U.S. media](#) are calling out for it. Oregon Representatives Blumenauer, Bonamici and DeFazio have co-sponsored HR 676, the Expanded and Improved Medicare for All Act. The California, New York, New Mexico and other legislatures are pursuing single payer health care bills this year. More than 20 states are working on systems that would ask for waivers from the federal government to innovate towards universal state systems.

The RAND study, created by the Oregon Legislature in HB 3260 in 2013 and funded by HB 2828 in 2015, is complete. You will hear about it in hearings and presentations this week. It says, essentially, that, for about what we currently pay for health care in Oregon, we can cover everyone living in the state with a comprehensive, universal publicly funded health care system.

There will be challenges in designing such a system and negotiating with the federal government to make it possible. This can currently be done under the Section 1332 Waiver under the ACA. And even if this act is repealed, Republicans controlling Congress have promised that states will be encouraged to innovate in their health care systems.

Health Care for All-Oregon is asking you to seize this historic moment and move towards universal health care by supporting SB 1046, the Health Care for the All Oregon Act, and by creating a work group of stakeholders to plan for and build a universal health care system in Oregon.

Please Note: HCAO also supports and advocates may speak to you today about HB 2122 CCO

Reform, SB558/HB2726 Cover All Kids, HB 2387 Drug Cost Control and HB 2578 Small Donation Matching. These all will help us move towards improving our health care system in Oregon.

Thanks for your time and consideration in these critical matters.

Respectfully,  
Charlie Swanson, Legislative Committee Chair  
Health Care for All-Oregon-Action

Jim Robison, President  
Health Care for All-Oregon-Action

Benjamin Gerritz, Vice-President  
Health Care for All-Oregon

Lee Mercer, President  
Health Care for All-Oregon