



## 2019 Issue Summaries

### Investing in Quality Health Care

We are ensuring that every Oregonian has access to quality, affordable health care. Every Oregonian deserves lower prescription drug prices, improved access to mental health care and substance use disorder treatment, and we must combat the opioid addiction epidemic.

#### **Improving Access and Quality of Care**

##### **Passed into Law**

###### Protecting Medicaid

HB 2010 fully funds Oregon's share of financial responsibility for the state Medicaid program, known as the Oregon Health Plan, for six years. The Oregon Health Plan covers 1.1 million Oregonians, including low-income adults, adults with disabilities, the aging and disabled population, and hundreds of thousands of low- and moderate-income children.

###### Tackling the Opioid Crisis

HB 2257 acknowledges that substance use disorder is a chronic illness and takes a multifaceted approach to Oregon's opioid crisis. The bill improves access to medication-assisted treatment, clarifies key language for providing syringe service programs, permits dental directors to monitor opioid use and prescribing patterns, and requires the Department of Corrections to study treatment for persons with substance use disorders who enter state custody and are released into communities.

###### Access to Naloxone

SB 910 makes it easier for family members to access naloxone when a loved one or other individual is at risk of or is overdosing on opioids. This bill allows pharmacists to distribute naloxone kits when opiates or opioids of a certain strength are prescribed. This bill also removes arbitrary restrictions that result in barriers in accessing local methadone clinics.

###### Statewide Prescription Drug Take Back Program

HB 3273 is an essential tool to combat the opioid epidemic in communities throughout Oregon. The bill requires pharmaceutical manufacturers selling in Oregon to cover the costs of collection, transportation, safe destruction of collected medicines, program outreach and administration of a take back program.

###### Access to Culturally Appropriate Care

HB 2011 supports Oregon's goal of ensuring equal access to culturally appropriate care. Whether you are aging, hard of seeing, of a culturally or ethnically diverse identity, this bill ensures all licensed health providers are prepared to treat patients in a manner that is culturally and linguistically responsive.

###### Prescription Drug Labels

SB 698 requires the Board of Pharmacy to develop rules so pharmacies across the state can make prescription drug labels available to patients in up to 14 languages. Providing languages in dual languages will ensure correct usage of prescription medications.

###### Prescription Drug Readers

HB 2935 provides a meaningful support to sight impaired individuals by requiring pharmacists to make prescription drug readers available upon request, allowing those individuals to safely and effectively manage their medications.

### Protecting Oregonians from Health Care Discrimination

SB 250 protects Oregonians from federal health care roll backs by codifying state statutory protections for people with pre-existing conditions, ensuring mental health parity, and prohibiting LGBTQI discrimination. This aligns key provisions of the Affordable Care Act with Oregon law.

### Curbing the Use of Tobacco and E-Cigarettes among Teens

HB 2270 sends a ballot measure to Oregon voters that would increase the state's tobacco tax and implement a new tax on inhalant delivery devices, also known as "vape" devices, to further fund the state's Medicaid program and services to reduce tobacco use. The Oregon Health Authority estimates tobacco contributes to 8,000 deaths per year in Oregon and costs the state \$1.5 billion in medical care. The Oregon Health Authority also has found that increasing the price of tobacco is the single most effective tool to reduce tobacco use, including youth consumption.

### Prohibiting Youth Access to Tobacco

HB 3436 bans shipping or mailing e-cigarettes without verifying the age of the consumer. This will help deter the underage use of e-cigarettes, which the Food and Drug Administration said increased by 78% for high school students and 48% among middle school students between 2017 and 2018.

### Ditching Dirty Diesel

Diesel exhaust contains dozens of toxic substances. One of the leading concerns is the particulate matter which is linked to a number of serious public health problems including aggravating asthma, heart and lung disease, cancer and premature death. HB 2007 takes a meaningful first step at curbing Oregon's dirty diesel problem by setting clean procurement standards for future Portland metro-area ODOT contracting, phasing out registrations of certain motor vehicles powered by diesel engines in the Portland metro area, and encouraging earlier adoption of cleaner, newer trucks.

## **Funded**

The Oregon Legislature made a historic investment in mental and behavioral health with over \$94 million in new and ongoing investments in addition to fully funding Medicaid. These investments include:

- \$10 million for adult and youth suicide prevention programs;
- \$7.6 million to support community-level treatment to reduce the Aid and Assist State Hospital population;
- \$5.7 million for interdisciplinary assessment teams to support children and their families at risk of falling into the state's care;
- \$13 million rate increase for Oregon's lowest paid substance use disorder providers and mental health providers;
- \$6 million in additional community mental health support after an initial \$9 million to backfill declining tobacco tax revenue for community mental health providers.

## **Making Health Care More Affordable**

### **Passed Into Law**

#### Holding Prescription Drug Middlemen Accountable

HB 2185 takes on pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs) and ensures small, local pharmacies have equal footing. Specifically, this bill ensures fair reimbursement practices for local pharmacies, prohibits “gag clauses” in PBM contracts to allow pharmacists to let consumers know when they can fill their prescription at a lower cost when paying cash, and ensures a claims and appeals process through the Department of Consumer and Business Services.

#### Pushing Back on Pharmaceutical Price Gouging

HB 2658 requires at least 60-day notice when a pharmaceutical manufacturer raises prices by 10% on a high-cost drug. When California passed a similar piece of legislation, pharmaceutical companies canceled or reduced planned increases. This bill will ensure insurers are able to maneuver around price hikes, providing the most affordable options to consumers and continuing to make Oregon a national leader in drug price transparency.

#### Curbing Medical Debt and Protecting Patients from Malicious Collection Practices

HB 3076 makes sure non-profit hospitals that receive millions of dollars in tax breaks are earning their tax break by providing a minimum standard of community benefit. This bill also establishes uniform financial assistance policies for those under 200% of the federal poverty level (FPL) and additional policies for those up to 400% of the FPL. This bill prohibits malicious collections practices for medical debt that is not waived under the financial policies established by HB 3076.

## **Future of Healthcare**

### **Passed Into Law**

#### Health Care for All

SB 770 establishes a Task Force on Universal Health Care, charged with recommending a design for a plan to provide publicly funded health care to all Oregonians. This bill takes a more immediate step by directing the Oregon Health Authority to develop a plan for a Medicaid buy-in program by May 1, 2020.

#### Curbing Out-of-Control Health Care Costs

SB 889 establishes a committee to create a statewide benchmark that will limit the total rate of growth across all health care services. This bill requires a framework be submitted to the legislature by September 15, 2020 for consideration.

#### Future of Health Care Delivery

HB 2447 directs the Oregon Health Authority to provide a forum for all vertically integrated, not-for-profit health care systems to collaborate to design a delivery system for Oregon’s future. Oregon’s health delivery challenges are plagued by competition and marred by trade secrets, prohibiting the ability of industries to truly communicate about interventions. HB 2447 creates a forum for this discussion to occur.

### **Made Progress, Not Signed into Law**

#### Ending Non-Medical Immunization Exemptions

HB 3063 would have prohibited philosophical exemptions from immunization requirements when children attend public, private, or charter schools. *Passed the House, died in the Senate.*