



# PRESS RELEASE

OREGON HOUSE DEMOCRATS

---

For Immediate Release  
June 15, 2017

For More Information, Contact:  
Scott Moore: 503-986-1904

## **House Vote Protects Health Care for More Than 350,000 Oregonians**

*Package of bills funding Medicaid passes House, heads to Senate*

This evening, the Oregon House of Representatives passed a package of bills to fund the Oregon Health Authority and to protect health care coverage to hundreds of thousands of low-income Oregonians.

The vote comes at an important juncture in the national healthcare debate, as congressional Republican leaders are currently working in secret to repeal the Affordable Care Act and replace it with a plan that would likely strip coverage from millions of Americans.

The Oregon Health Plan provides health care coverage to more than 1 million Oregonians who are at or below 138% of the Federal Poverty Level. For a single household, that equals less than \$16,400 a year.

That's one million mothers, fathers, grandparents, sons, and daughters who receive health care access through this critical program. Thanks to the Medicaid expansion through the Affordable Care Act, more than 370,000 Oregonians were enrolled in health care—many of them for the first time.

“This model lowers costs for everyone in the long-term,” says Rep. Dan Rayfield (D-Corvallis), who carried the bills on the House floor. “If fewer people were covered through Medicaid, hospitals would see a drastic increase in uncompensated care, and that would make premiums and other costs even higher for everyone. We’ve had this model before, and it didn’t work. Now we know that everyone benefits when more people are insured.”

HB 2391 built on Oregon’s existing hospital provider tax to create the funding to continue offering coverage to those who need it without requiring cuts to schools or other critical services. The baseline Provider tax program is an established program that has garnered bipartisan, bicameral support since 2003. House Bill 5026 is the budget bill for the Oregon Health Authority.

“Before the Medicaid expansion, too many uninsured mothers and fathers would lie awake at night worrying themselves sick over what would happen if their kids suffered an injury or illness,” said Rep. Teresa Alonso Leon (D-Woodburn). “Imagine the anxiety, the heartbreak, the helplessness. Would they be able to take their ill child to see a doctor? Would an otherwise treatable sickness become a life-threatening emergency? Or worse? No parent should have to ask themselves these questions.”

“Under the expanded coverage through the Oregon Health Plan, these families finally have the peace of mind that comes with basic access to health care,” Rep. Alonso Leon added. “We’re on the road to healthier families, healthier communities, and a healthier state.”

This package of bills maximizes federal matching funds and is the result of four months of debate and discussion in a bipartisan, bicameral workgroup. This approach has the support of major health care groups, including the Oregon Medical Association, the Hospital Association, 15 CCOs, and an overwhelming majority of insurers who do business in the state.

###