PRESS RELEASE

OREGON HOUSE DEMOCRATS

Health Care Affordability and Accessibility Measures Pass the Oregon House

Bills tackle a number of issues from protecting the ACA to ensuring equity

SALEM, Ore. – Legislation to increase affordability and accessibility in health care passed the Oregon House of Representatives this week.

House Bill 4110 increases the state's minimum grace period for payments on health insurance premiums. The legislation seeks to address the issue of Oregonians who miss open enrollment or lose coverage on an existing individual health plan due to a late payment, or misunderstanding, and have few options for affordable comprehensive health coverage.

"We heard about the tangible ways that this legislation will help everyday Oregonians," said Rep. Paul Holvey (D-Eugene), the chief sponsor of House Bill 4110. "One woman missed the short grace period by two days due to poor health and was kicked off her health insurance. Another resident paid a charge of $3 past due one day late and lost his coverage. This policy will better support these Oregonians and keep more people enrolled in healthcare."

House Bill 4102 requires reporting on prior authorization, the process that providers and health insurers use to determine whether medicine, medical procedures, or medical devices are covered by insurance. This bill will support both transparency in reporting and simpler procedures that make our healthcare system easier to navigate.

"In my work as a primary care provider, there are too many times I experience unnecessary administrative burdens in providing medical services, which has led to complications and hospitalizations," said Rep. Rachel Prusak (D-West Linn), the chief sponsor of House Bill 4102. "On top of seeing patients, many healthcare clinicians across the state experience stress because they are also faced with extra calls, notes, and faxes just to get the procedures, medications, and devices that they know their patients need."

The House also passed House Bill 4081, meant to reduce the administrative regulations and burdens for a critical workforce within health care, physician assistants. The legislation reforms the practice agreements physician assistants enter into with physicians.

"This legislation is about reducing barriers and increasing access to care for Oregonians in every corner of our state," said Rep. Tiffiny Mitchell (D-Astoria), the chief sponsor of House Bill 4081. "Physician assistants are at the front line of health care for many Oregonians, especially rural Oregonians. I am proud to stand with them in cutting unnecessary red tape."

Finally, the House passed House Bill 4161 which boosts Regional Health Equity Coalitions (RHEC), regional, community-driven organizations that work to address local health disparities.

"The RHECs are doing great work to serve historically underserved communities in the counties where they are operational, but there is still a significant portion of Oregon lacking one of these organizations," said Rep. Teresa Alonso Leon (D-Woodburn). "This legislation is about building capacity and meeting the health care needs of those of our fellow community members who might not otherwise be reached."

Rep. Marty Wilde (D-Eugene) said that all of this legislation continues to build on the significant progress Oregon has made in recent years to expand access and increase affordability to health care.

"Every Oregon resident deserves access to high-quality, affordable health care," Wilde said. "I am proud that we continue to make progress every session, improving our health care system, and ensuring working Oregonians have the support they need."

All of the bills now move to the Senate for consideration.

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