



PRESS RELEASE

OREGON HOUSE DEMOCRATS

For Immediate Release
May 20, 2019

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Legislation Seeks to Reduce Medical Debt, Increase Access to Affordable Health Care

Sets requirements for non-profit hospitals to serve most vulnerable Oregonians

SALEM – Today, the Oregon House of Representatives passed legislation would help Oregonians avoid medical debt, prevent overzealous debt collection and set a minimum spending floor every non-profit hospital must meet for community benefit

“Every Oregonian deserves access to quality, affordable health care,” said chief sponsor Rep. Andrea Salinas (D-Lake Oswego). “Crushing medical debt does not have to be something that we accept. This legislation is about setting clear standards for every hospital, so that they are fulfilling their missions and meeting their obligations to the individuals they serve.”

[House Bill 3076](#) requires hospitals to have a written policy for financial assistance, including forgiveness or reduction of the unpaid debt for patients who up to 400 percent of the federal poverty level.

For Oregonians who have outstanding medical debt, this legislation prohibits exorbitant interest rates and sets interest rate limits to ensure individuals are not being gouged by hospitals or are not the subject of overzealous collection practices. It also requires hospitals to provide clear information on financial assistance policies and prohibits medical debt from being passed on to families.

“Medical debt can force the families burdened with it into generational poverty,” said co-sponsor Rep. Marty Wilde (D-Central Lane and Linn Counties). “Bankruptcy and poverty should not go hand-in-hand with receiving medically necessary care.”

Additionally, the legislation creates a community benefit spending floor to ensure non-profit hospitals are meeting their requirements to serve the community benefit. It establishes flexible policies to meet the needs of providers across the state, and it sets a clear standard for hospitals and their affiliated nonprofit clinics to report data and establish a community benefit spending floor to earn their tax-exempt status.

“No one should have to choose between a lifetime of medical debt and getting the care they or a loved one needs,” said co-sponsor Rep. Sheri Schouten (D-Beaverton). “As someone who spent their career dedicated to serving our communities at the frontline, I have seen the devastating health care choices Oregonians have to make. We must continue working to improve our system.”

The legislation was co-sponsored by Rep. Mitch Greenlick (D-Portland), Rep. Alissa Keny-Guyer (D-Portland), Rep. Rob Nosse (D-Portland), Rep. Schouten, Rep. Wilde, Sen. Shemia Fagan (D-Happy Valley), Sen. James Manning (D-Eugene), Sen. Laurie Monnes-Anderson (D-Gresham).

The bill, which passed 38 to 21, now goes to the Oregon Senate for consideration.

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