



NEWS

Oregon Legislature - House Democratic Caucus

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House Votes to Create Health Insurance Exchange

SB 99 will establish a central marketplace to compare cost and quality of health plans

SALEM – The Oregon House today voted to pass SB 99, a major health care reform bill that will create a health insurance exchange in Oregon. SB 99 now moves to the Governor’s desk for his signature.

A health insurance exchange is a central marketplace for health insurance that provides one-stop shopping for individuals and small businesses to compare rates, benefits and quality among plans. Exchanges are intended to improve competition and transparency in the market for health insurance while setting standards for benefit level and cost.

“I have long been in favor of creating a health exchange in Oregon as a one-stop-shop for individual and small groups to purchase reasonably-priced health insurance,” said Representative Mitch Greenlick (D-Portland), Co-Chair of the House Health Care Committee. “These purchasers stand to realize savings on health care costs under this plan, including the opportunity to receive federal tax credits for plans purchased in the exchange. SB 99 is good for businesses, good for consumers and good for Oregon.”

Under Oregon’s exchange, set to begin in 2014, consumers will be able to review plan options through a web site or with the assistance of a community-based organization designed to help individuals find the best insurance plan for their needs. The Exchange will also allow qualified businesses and individuals to access federal tax credits available in 2014 to help make premiums more affordable.

“Under SB 99, the Exchange Board will have the opportunity to be an active purchaser that uses its leverage to increase availability and lower costs for consumers and small businesses,” said Representative Ben Cannon (D-Portland), Co-Vice Chair of the House Health Care Committee. “An exchange is a common-sense tool that is long overdue in the insurance market.”

The federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act requires all states to implement an exchange of their own or use the federally-administered exchange. Oregon was awarded an “Early Innovator” federal grant of \$48 million to develop our own exchange. Oregon was

selected to receive these grants to design, implement, and share the information technology infrastructure needed to operate the exchange.

“Oregon has been an innovator on health care and an example for the nation,” said Representative Val Hoyle (D-West Eugene/Junction City), who sits on the House Health Care Committee. “Although health care access and affordability is a challenge across America, this bill is an Oregon solution that works for our state and is the most important legislation for small businesses that we have passed this session.”

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