

SB 1542, In-home care providers

Under Senate Bill 1542, the Home Care Commission will administer a program enabling private payers to buy home care services from the Commission's home care registry. Currently, only individuals covered by Medicaid may hire caregivers through the registry.

The Commission will be responsible for a variety of tasks, including publicizing the registry, screening workers, setting standards, providing referrals, establishing rates, and paying wages.

For the 2013-15 biennium the bill has a fiscal impact of about \$1.3 million associated with start-up costs; these are anticipated to be covered by a General Fund appropriation in the session budget reconciliation bill. After start-up, the program is expected to be self-supporting when it launches in July 2015; the bill lays out steps for the Commission to take if revenues are insufficient to cover costs.

The Joint Committee on Ways & Means recommends approval of SB 1542, as amended.

Closing

For seniors and those with disabilities, access to homecare can make the difference between being able to live independently, at home, and having to move into some kind of facility. For Oregonians who have their care paid by Medicaid, they can hire a home care workers through the Home Care Commission Registry. The national organization AARP and the New York Times have identified this kind of system as a national best practice for providing high-quality and safe home care.

This bill allows all Oregonians who need home care to have another choice to hire someone to work in their home, in addition to any other choices they have. They can make individual inquiries, or use a community bulletin board, they may go through an agency, or with this bill, they could also look at the registry. They can compare price, quality, and anything else, and decide how they want to go about bringing someone into their home.

There's a **need** for this. It's about **access** to reliable homecare, including where no agency exists. It will be **self-supporting**. It's about **choosing** the appropriate care. SB 1542 bill will provide **peace-of-mind** for Oregon seniors and their families, and I hope you will join me in supporting this important legislation.

Other points

There is a need for this. Oregonians, regardless of income level, are looking for help for themselves, or a family member.

- The alternative—hiring a homecare worker directly—also poses burdens for Oregonians. It can be very challenging to figure out the legal and tax requirements and deal with workers' compensation and unemployment. There is also no background check or guarantee that a caregiver has received appropriate training.
- In some communities, there is no agency: >1/3 counties=0 (Columbia, Tillamook, Polk, Jefferson, Lake, Harney, Crook, Wheeler, Grant, Union, Wallowa, Morrow, Sherman and Gilliam)

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- SB 1542 is a solution that we know will work. The bill expands access to the Oregon Home Care Commission Registry and Referral System, which is already successfully helping connect qualified, background-checked caregivers with the thousands of Oregonians whose care is paid for by Medicaid.
- All homecare providers on the registry have passed criminal and abuse background checks (every 2 yrs), and users can search the registry by training and other qualifications such as experience, skills, and verified training.
- SB 1542 will enable Oregonians at all income levels to search the state registry and hire a trained, background-checked caregiver who best meets their needs. Consumers will be able to purchase hours of care from the state, with the state recouping its costs through a small administrative fee.
- It also increases **safety** by ensuring that Oregonians are hiring qualified caregivers who have passed criminal and abuse background checks, rather than hiring off of Craigslist or community bulletin boards.
- Endorsed by several organizations including: United Seniors of Oregon; Oregon State Council for Retired Citizens; Disability Rights Oregon; Alzheimer's Association, Oregon Chapter; and Family Forward Oregon
- Cost: caregiver hourly rate, benefits, taxes withheld, and worker's compensation, and administrative fee to cover costs of administering the program. No public ongoing public subsidy to run this program which just facilitates the private employment arrangements. (benefits: for those working >40 hrs a month: access to health and dental care; and earn 32 hours paid leave a year- < an hour a week)
- Some people may want to hire and supervise on their own; some may prefer to hire through an agency and have the agency do that for them.