



NEWS

Oregon Legislature • House Majority Office

For Immediate Release
July 2, 2008

Contact Geoff Sugerman
503-986-1904

2007 Law Leads to First-Ever Review of Insurance Rate Increase

Oregon House Democrats said today that legislation passed last session helped pave the way for the first-ever regulatory review hearing on skyrocketing individual insurance rates for health care plans in Oregon.

Yesterday, a request for review was filed by an individual facing a 26% increase in insurance premiums from Regence. Now, according to DCBS, a hearing will be scheduled to determine if the rate increase is justified. Another Oregon insurance company, Lifewise, also recently raised rates 28% on individual policies.

In 2007, State Rep. Representative Nancy Nathanson (D- Eugene) passed HB 3103 to give the public more opportunities to weigh in about proposed insurance rate increases by requiring insurance company rate increase requests to be publicly posted by DCBS, the state agency regulating insurance companies.

“HB 3103 was specifically designed to allow consumers the opportunity to see and challenge these rate increases before they go into effect, although affected customers still retain the ability to protest after rates have been approved,” said Nathanson. “This gives the public more opportunity to weigh in and requires more transparency from the agency that regulates these rates.”

House Majority Leader Dave Hunt said this marks the first time consumers have challenged an insurance rate increase.

“Now, because we made the process more transparent, we have the first opportunity for a hearing to be held on the validity of this rate increase,” said Hunt (D-Clackamas). “This public oversight has long been missing in the debate over increasing health care costs.”

Along with legislation requiring greater disclosure, the Legislature also passed a bill creating the Oregon Health Fund Board, tasking that group with developing a plan to make health care more accessible and affordable for all Oregonians

“Rising health care costs and skyrocketing premiums are one big problem all consumers face. The Health Fund Board will be back before us in 2009 with a list of recommended strategies to make health care more accessible and affordable,” said Hunt.