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‘Cover All Kids’ ensures health coverage for Oregon’s children *SB 558 modifies eligibility guidelines and boosts outreach for OHP services*

SALEM – A bipartisan, bicameral group of legislators came together to advance the “Cover All Kids” bill to ensure all of Oregon’s children can have access to health coverage.

“Cover All Kids” – Senate Bill 558, which passed the Senate today – modifies the eligibility guidelines for the Health Care for All Oregon Children Program and requires the Oregon Health Authority to establish a working group that will advise the agency on outreach and the marketing elements of the program. Sen. Arnie Roblan (D-Coos Bay) and Sen. Jeff Kruse (R-Roseburg) are the chief sponsors in the Senate.

“As a former high school principal and Oregon teacher, I have seen directly how health impacts students’ success in the classroom,” Roblan said. “I believe that all children deserve the opportunity to be healthy and successful.”

The bill also allows Oregon Health Authority and the Department of Consumer and Business Services to request federal approval to receive additional applicable federal funding.

It is no secret that a lack of health coverage for low-income children in Oregon leads to higher rates of school absenteeism. With early intervention and behavioral health screenings, many health issues that affect school performance, attendance, behavior and overall health of our children can be addressed.

The Oregon Health Plan provides health coverage to qualifying individuals and families through federal Medicaid and Children’s Health Insurance Program funds. According to the Oregon Health Authority, more than 400,000 children were enrolled in Medicaid/CHIP coverage as of

September of last year. Senate Bill 558 ensures this coverage to all children and adolescents residing in Oregon whose family incomes fall below 300 percent of the federal poverty level.

“Lack of access to quality health care affects our children’s abilities to grow into successful, well-functioning adults,” Kruse said. “This bill will help us to offer health care coverage for more children and do outreach to eligible families.”

More than 90 organizations came together to support Cover All Kids. The coalition included carriers, providers, coordinated care organizations and community-based organizations. The coalition is a product of people and groups coming together to find a solution that works to benefit all children.

Senate Bill 558 now goes to the House of Representatives for consideration.

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