



## SENATE MAJORITY OFFICE

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### NEWS RELEASE

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#### **Senate takes steps to cover portion of Medicaid budget gap**

*HB 2010 is a key portion of funding Oregon's health care expansion*

SALEM – The Oregon State Senate took steps to fund a portion of Oregon's Medicaid expansion and protect health care coverage for thousands of Oregon families.

[House Bill 2010](#) – which passed on the Senate floor today – extends the assessment on health care providers, which is used to cover the state's share of the Medicaid program and allows the state to obtain significant federal matching funds. Oregon is one of 49 states using this type of funding mechanism. The legislation was negotiated as part of a larger budget package for the Oregon Health Plan throughout the interim.

“This is a big step forward in our ability to continue ensuring that health care remains within reach for all Oregonians,” said Sen. Elizabeth Steiner Hayward, D-Beaverton, who serves as a co-chair of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means. “This only gets us part of the way there, but it's a big piece of the puzzle. It also takes measures to keep rates low for employers and other Oregonians who buy their insurance in the private market.”

The bill provides support for insurance carriers to protect against catastrophic claims, which allows insurers to pass along savings to their consumers. This benefits small businesses purchasing employee benefits and those who purchase insurance individually.

Currently, the Oregon Health Plan – which administers the state's Medicaid program – provides health care coverage to nearly 400,000 children. It also provides coverage for seniors and

people with disabilities, as well as adults earning at or below 138 percent of the federal poverty level (about \$16,700 per year). In total, about 1 million Oregonians are covered by the program.

“The entire package helps stabilize health insurance rates for everyone by providing Oregonians with lower-cost preventive care, rather than forcing people to get their health care in the emergency room where the costs are paid by the insurance premiums of every Oregonian,” said Sen. Betsy Johnson, D-Scappoose, who serves as co-chair of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means. “It also provides a safeguard for insurers when catastrophic claims hit, so that they are protected from the extraordinary. This lowers insurance rates to the consumer.”

House Bill 2010 now goes to the Governor for her signature.

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