



SENATE MAJORITY OFFICE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 3, 2025

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Oregonians Describe Depth of Harm Likely Under Record Medicaid Cuts Considered by Congress

*Health care consumers, providers, and other leaders tell state Senate committee
Oregonians will lose access and health care system will strain under proposed rollbacks*

SALEM, OR – Medicaid cuts proposed by the Trump administration will make health care more difficult to access for Oregonians in every corner of the state and will threaten the wellbeing of some of the state's most vulnerable residents, panelists told the Oregon Senate Health Care Committee today.

"More than 1.4 million Oregonians have Oregon Health Plan coverage funded by Medicaid, and it's clear from the testimony today that slashing the program will have serious impacts on that population and well beyond," said **Committee Chair Deb Patterson (D – Salem)**. "Our rural hospitals and clinics will lose funding, decreased staffing could make appointments harder to get, and people who are forced to delay care will face worse health outcomes."

Today, nearly 97 percent of Oregonians have health insurance, up from just 85 percent in 2011. Oregon Medicaid Director Emma Sandoe explained the value of high rates of coverage in the state.

"When more people have coverage, it's not just good for the people who are enrolled, it is good for the whole system," she told the committee. "People covered are able to treat disease earlier, and providers are able to be paid for the health care services they deliver. This keeps providers in business for everyone."

Dan Grigg, CEO of Wallowa County Health Care District, which operates Wallowa Memorial Hospital and clinics in Enterprise, Joseph, and Wallowa, emphasized risks to rural Oregon if Medicaid is cut.

"Proposed federal changes will hit rural hospitals hardest," he said. "More uncompensated care and rising costs could force hospitals to reduce services."

Andrea Carr, a mother and personal support worker who lives in Sprague River, stressed to the committee the human impact of Medicaid coverage.

“My adult daughter, Anicia, has autism and lives with complex medical needs. The Oregon Health Plan covers her care, and Medicaid also pays for the program that compensates me as Anicia’s caregiver for a certain number of hours every month,” Carr explained to the committee. “Simply put, Medicaid is what makes it possible for Anicia to live safely and with dignity and independence. I’m not going to sugarcoat this. Families like mine are terrified right now. This is not a theoretical threat. It’s real. And it’s personal.”

The proposed Medicaid cuts passed the U.S. House of Representatives May 22 and now are under consideration by the U.S. Senate.

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