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Legislation sets stage for universal health care

SB 770: Establishes board that would set up Health Care for All Oregon Plan

SALEM – A bill with bipartisan and bicameral support to establish a committee to explore universal health care for the state of Oregon has passed the Senate and will be advancing to the House of Representatives.

[Senate Bill 770](#) – the Health Care for All Oregon Bill – creates a board that would explore options for creating the Health Care for Oregon Plan for recommendation to the Oregon Legislature and sets up other components necessary to establish such a plan. It also allows the committee to create a Medicaid buy-in proposal.

“Health care is a basic human necessity and it should be a right,” Sen. James Manning (D-Eugene), a chief co-sponsor of the bill, said. “We all need health care, and you can’t survive without it. We’ve got to make sure that we get universal health care set up in Oregon so that none of us go bankrupt or die just because we get sick and don’t have health insurance.”

The bill sets eligibility requirements for a Health Care for Oregon Plan. Those include being an Oregon resident, but those living outside the state who are employed full-time in Oregon also can use the program, if they pay into it. Immediate family members and dependents of qualifying individuals also will qualify, as the bill is written.

It also creates a Health Care for All Board comprising members from a variety of backgrounds, appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the State Senate. Those board members will plan and supervise the development, implementation and management of the plan, with final

approval from the Oregon Legislature. Funding would come from a dedicated fund – distinct from the state’s General Fund – that would be established within the State Treasury.

“In Oregon, we take care of each other, and health care is one of the most basic needs,” Sen. Michael Dembrow (D-Portland) said. “To reach the point to where our communities around the state are truly thriving, we all must have access to affordable health care.”

Senate Bill 770 now goes to the House of Representatives for consideration.

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