



# SENATE MAJORITY OFFICE

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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Bill ensures sexual assault can't be considered preexisting condition** *HB 3631 protects victims from discrimination by insurers*

SALEM – Victims of sexual assault can be assured their experiences won't prevent them from getting health care with legislation passed this evening in the Oregon Senate. HB 3631 prohibits insurers from discriminating against victims of sexual violence by treating that victimization, or physical or mental injuries sustained as a result of that victimization, as a preexisting condition that would exclude or limit coverage.

“Approximately one in six Oregon women will experience sexual assault in her lifetime. This bill corrects an injustice that adds insult to injury when victims of sexual assault and domestic violence are at risk of losing their health care coverage,” said Senator Diane Rosenbaum (D-Portland), who co-chairs the Oregon Women's Health and Wellness Alliance.

Although sexual assault is a medical emergency, a minority of victims seek immediate medical care. The Attorney General's Sexual Assault Task Force reports that recent studies have shown that 37 percent of health care costs may be the result of sexual assault, which includes mental health care, disease processes that are the result of drugs, nicotine and alcohol addiction, heart disease and hypertension.

“Sexual assault can have permanently damaging mental, emotional, and physical side effects,” said Deputy Senate Majority Leader Laurie Monnes Anderson (D-Gresham) “Hopefully this legislation can encourage victims to ask for the care they need without fear of denial.”

HB 3631 was introduced in the House by Representative Suzanne VanOrman (D-Hood River). The bill will now go to the Governor for his approval.

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