



## SENATE MAJORITY OFFICE

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### NEWS RELEASE

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#### **Senate passes new process to resolve health care disputes** *SB 483 allows for discussion and mediation between patients and providers*

SALEM – A bill that would create a new process for patients and health care providers to resolve disputes passed the Senate floor this morning by a 26-3 vote. Senate Bill 483 implements the Early Discussion and Mediation process, which will reduce the volume of expensive malpractice lawsuits, improve patient-provider relationships, improve the practice environment for doctors and protect a patient’s constitutional right to access justice.

“Early Discussion and Mediation is an innovation that will improve patient safety by allowing providers and patients to openly discuss health incidents that cause harm,” said Senator Floyd Prozanski (D-Eugene), chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee. “Ultimately, this new process will lead to better care at a lower cost.”

The Early Discussion and Mediation proposal has been endorsed by both the Oregon Medical Association and the Oregon Trial Lawyers Association. Both organizations worked together to find consensus in a workgroup on patient safety and defensive medicine convened by Governor John A. Kitzhaber under the direction of 2012’s Health Care Transformation Act (SB 1580).

“As a doctor, this new discussion and mediation process will ultimately lead to greater patient safety and better patient outcomes,” said Senator Alan Bates (D-Medford). “SB 483 opens up a new window for patients and providers to be able to discuss care directly, greatly lessening the need for court proceedings.”

The Early Discussion and Mediation process sets up an opportunity for health care providers and patients in Oregon to voluntarily meet in order to discuss a health incident that caused harm. The confidentiality rules of the process will allow providers to discuss these incidents free of fear the conversation can be used against them in court. These discussions could include an apology and an offer of compensation from the health care provider to the patient.

“This is truly a watershed moment for health care policy, and I want to congratulate the participants of the workgroup for this remarkable achievement,” said Senator Diane Rosenbaum (D-Portland), the Senate Majority Leader. “Oregon will improve its health care delivery system with this innovative solution that promotes patient safety while saving money in the long run.”

The bill now goes to the floor of the Oregon House of Representatives for a vote.

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