



SENATE MAJORITY OFFICE

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Senate approves bill to guarantee access to health insurance for sick kids
Senate Bill 514 will help protect some of Oregon's most vulnerable children

SALEM – The Senate approved Senate Bill 514 today, legislation that allows the Department of Consumer and Business Services to create a program that ensures children with high-risk medical conditions can get health insurance year round.

“In many cases, children with chronic or life-threatening conditions are being turned away from coverage. I can only imagine what this is like for the parent of a sick child,” said Senator Laurie Monnes Anderson (D-Gresham), chief sponsor of the bill and the Chair of the Senate Health Care, Human Services, and Rural Health Policy Committee. “This bill will allow parents to enroll their children in an insurance plan and make sure their children get the care they need.”

The federal health care reform law passed in 2010, known as the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, requires that insurers cover children with pre-existing health conditions. This requirement prompted many health insurers to stop offering plans to high-risk children or to limit their options for enrolling in insurance.

“Oregon has already proven itself as a leader in providing health care coverage to children by passing the Healthy Kids program last session,” said Senate Majority Leader Diane Rosenbaum (D-Portland). “This additional work being done in Senate Bill 514 will enhance our effort to make sure every Oregon child has access to the care they need and deserve.”

SB 514 addresses the insurance enrollment problems for high-risk kids and their families by allowing the Insurance Division of the Department of Consumer and Business Services to use the Oregon Medical Insurance Pool assessment process to spread the risk of insuring children with high-risk medical conditions over a much larger insurance group than is possible for individual insurers. This means that children with cancer and other high-risk health conditions will be more likely to stay on the same insurance plan as their families, keep their own doctor, and be able to enroll in health insurance year-round rather than waiting for an open enrollment period.

SB 514 has the support from many advocates and insurers in Oregon. Senate Bill 514 now moves to the House.

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