



SENATE MAJORITY OFFICE

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**Four proposals to increase health care efficiency scheduled to
move in Senate Committee this evening**
Programs will give Oregon competitive advantage for federal dollars

SALEM – Four pieces of legislation that will put Oregon at the forefront of modernizing health care technologies are scheduled for work session by the Senate Health Care and Veterans’ Affairs Committee this evening. These bills have the potential reduce costs for Oregonians while attracting millions in federal matching funds as part of the Obama administration’s plan for health care reform and economic stimulus.

“Health care reform is about more than just expanding access,” said Deputy Majority Leader Laurie Monnes Anderson (D-Gresham), chair of the committee. “We also have to look at inefficiencies in our system to lower costs, save time, and improve care.”

SB 451 requires the Department of Human Services to establish and operate a statewide registry for collection and dissemination of physician orders for life-sustaining treatments, known also as POLSTs. This registry will help ensure that an individual’s wishes for emergency care are immediately available to health care providers, particularly for those patients with advanced chronic illness.

SB 452 establishes a Health Information Technology Oversight Council to support the accelerated adoption of electronic health records. Research shows that the modernization of health care records can improve efficiency, reduce mistakes, strengthen disease management efforts, and improve care coordination. Within 12 years, Oregon could see a savings of \$1 billion per year by investing in health information technology.

SB 455 brings health care providers and insurers together with the state to develop and implement common evidence-based clinical guidelines and best practice standards for the use of medical technology. This legislation will improve the health care delivery system in Oregon by reducing costs and improving access and quality.

SB 457 will require the Office of Health Policy and Research to create a health care workforce database. Currently, the state has no means to track ongoing, consistent, comparable data about our health care workforce. This database would provide critical information about the supply and distribution of health providers around the state – information that will inform efforts to building an

effective health care delivery system.

“These are common sense steps to modernize our health care system,” said Senator Alan Bates (D-Ashland), a physician and co-chair of the Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Services. “Advances in medical technologies will save lives. A health care workforce database will allow us to identify shortages in services. The POLST registry is about the wishes of patients and will give first responders the ability to respect those wishes.”

These four proposals are part of a package put forth by the Oregon Health Fund Board this session. Additional bills that look at health care efficiency and cost-containment will be considered later in session.

“These bills set the stage for Oregon to take advantage of federal dollars to modernize our health care system,” said Senate Majority Leader Richard Devlin (D-Tualatin). “Our caucus has made a commitment to affordable and accessible health care this session and we’re taking a big step in that direction today.”

Once passed, all four bills will go to Ways and Means for consideration. Tonight’s committee hearing is scheduled for 6:00 PM in Hearing Room E at the Oregon State Capitol.

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