



SENATE MAJORITY OFFICE

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Bill to reduce health care costs and expand access passes Senate

SB 569A streamlines credential requirements for health care providers to use telemedicine at Oregon hospitals

SALEM—This morning the Oregon Senate advanced a proposal that streamlines medical credentialing in order to expand access to quality, affordable health care. Senate Bill 569A, which passed on a unanimous vote, simplifies hospital requirements in order to allow health care providers to advise patients and other providers at a distance using modern conferencing technology.

“Over the past five years, access to emergency specialty medical care has been greatly enhanced by the growth of telemedicine services,” said Senator Elizabeth Steiner Hayward MD (D-Beaverton). “SB 569A will eliminate time-consuming barriers for physicians seeking to provide telemedicine services. As direct result, we will increase access to medical services statewide.”

The recent use of telemedicine by hospitals statewide shows that medical experts such as stroke neurologists, pediatric and neonatal intensive care physicians, genetics specialists, and psychiatrists can effectively treat patients through teleconferencing systems. Telemedicine has allowed hundreds of patients to receive medical care from the comfort of their own communities and saved more than \$2 million in transport costs for patients and providers.

“For Oregonians in rural areas, being seen by specialists can mean a time-consuming and costly trip across the state,” said Senator Alan Bates (D-Medford), who is a physician. “This bill will improve access to quality, affordable health care for Oregonians by reducing some of the barriers that exist to being seen by the best providers out there.”

One of the biggest barriers to increased implementation of telemedicine services in Oregon is the lack of a standardized credentialing system for providers. Often, providers have to compile dozens of pages of documentation for each hospital where they provide telemedicine consultations, and requirements vary. SB 569A will help solve this paperwork problem by creating a single, uniform set of standards required at each hospital. This will eliminate time-consuming barriers to critical consultations and care for patients.

SB 569A will now go to the Oregon House of Representatives for consideration.

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