



SENATE MAJORITY OFFICE

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CONTACT: Molly Woon (503) 986-1074
molly.woon@state.or.us

Senate votes to expand access to life-saving clinical medical trials

SB 316 will require insurance companies to continue providing routine care to patients

SALEM—Legislation expanding patient access to clinical trials was passed by the Oregon Senate this morning. SB 316 will require insurance companies to cover routine care for patients participating in FDA approved clinical trials.

“This legislation is about access,” said Senate Majority Leader Richard Devlin (D-Tualatin), sponsor of the bill. “I introduced this bill because of a constituent whose insurance company denied her basic coverage for participating in a clinical trial—a trial that had the potential to dramatically improve her quality of life.”

Clinical trials provide potential pathways towards improved care, more effective medication, and ultimately, cures, for a variety of diseases, said Devlin. However, because some health plans define clinical trials as ‘experimental’ or ‘investigational,’ some insurance policies exclude the costs of routine care a patient would normally receive whether they were enrolled in the trial or not. This routine care includes blood work, x-rays, and basic tests, even when that care is ordered by a primary physician not associated with a clinical trial.

“The next generation of cures will come out of the work being done in clinical trials,” said Sen. Alan Bates (D-Ashland), a practicing physician. “Here in Oregon we have doctors doing groundbreaking work in cancer treatment at OHSU and the Willamette Valley Cancer Institute. Senate Bill 316 will allow more Oregonians to take advantage of the progress being made in our own back yard.”

During initial testimony for SB 316 physicians and advocates from across Oregon came to the Capitol to explain the benefits of clinical trials, including Dr. Brian Druker, Director of the OHSU Cancer Institute. The panel spoke of how clinical trials can provide access to cutting-edge medicine for patients.

“Our caucus has a commitment to expanding access to health care at all levels,” said Deputy Senate Majority Leader Laurie Monnes Anderson (D-Gresham), chair of the Senate Health Care Committee. “There is a real opportunity here for patients to benefit from clinical trials and SB 316 will remove some of the roadblocks to these opportunities.”

SB 316 will now move to the House. For more on information on the Access to Clinical Trials Coalition, click [here](#).

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