



SENATE MAJORITY OFFICE

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Partial mastectomies to be covered in updated law for breast cancer survivors *HB 3616 will close loophole in insurance coverage for reconstructive surgery*

SALEM – The Senate approved a bill this morning that closes a loophole that allows insurers to deny coverage for certain breast cancer-related procedures. While current law indicates that reconstructive surgery for breast cancer victims who have had a mastectomy must be covered, the statute that defines mastectomy is somewhat ambiguous. This has allowed some insurance providers in Oregon to exploit this uncertainty and deny patients coverage for reconstructive surgery if they have had only a lumpectomy or other surgical treatment.

“Every breast cancer survivor who has had a mastectomy or lumpectomy should have access to reconstructive services,” said Senate Majority Leader Diane Rosenbaum (D-Portland), a breast cancer survivor and author of Oregon’s original law on insurance coverage for reconstructive surgery for breast cancer survivors. “This is a necessary and important update to the law we passed in 2003 to help women recovering from breast cancer.”

The federal Women’s Health and Cancer Rights Act of 1998 provides protections to patients who choose to have breast reconstruction in connection with a mastectomy. Current Oregon law requires that health insurers cover enumerated mastectomy-related services. House Bill 3616 clarifies that insurers are required to cover the surgical removal of all or part of a breast or a breast tumor suspected to be malignant.

“One in eight women will develop invasive breast cancer in their lifetime,” said Senator Laurie Monnes Anderson (D-Gresham), chair of the Senate Health Care, Human Services, and Rural Health Policy Committee. “Most of us know a breast cancer survivor and we recognize the tremendous impact this disease can have on a woman and her family. House Bill 3616 is a simple and necessary fix to a serious matter for many breast cancer patients.”

HB 3616 was introduced in the House by Representative Val Hoyle (D-Eugene). The bill now goes to the Governor for his signature.

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