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Governor signs bill expanding 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 signed by Governor Ted Kulongoski Tuesday. 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.”

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.

“Clinical trials allow patients access to new and potentially more effective treatments,” said Druker. “For too long, Oregonians have been discouraged from participating by the threat of insurance coverage denials. I applaud the vision and leadership of the Oregon Legislature in passing legislation to remove this barrier. This is a significant victory for patients and for medical research in Oregon.”

Clinical trials provide potential pathways towards improved care, more effective medication, and ultimately, cures, for a variety of diseases. 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.

For more on information on the Access to Clinical Trials Coalition, click [here](#).

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