



Oregon

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Two-Track Health Reform Plan Sails Through the Senate

HB 2116 Provides Health Insurance for 140,000 More Oregonians

HB 2009 Tackles Affordability, Transparency and Quality

The Oregon Health Fund Board's vision for comprehensive health reform in the state, laid out in the plan, "*Aim High: Building a Healthy Oregon*," was crafted after over 100 public meetings and with citizen input from all corners of the state. With the passage of the two bills today which are designed to work in tandem, implementation of the plan will soon begin to provide health coverage to more of Oregon's vulnerable citizens while simultaneously undertaking an ambitious agenda to improve health care delivery and reduce medical inflation.

House Bill 2116 will leverage nearly \$2 billion over the next four years to help the state provide health insurance for 200,000 Oregonians through the Oregon Health Plan (OHP) and a new shared-cost insurance product called "Kids Connect." 80,000 of those newly insured will be children under the age of 19 and the remaining will include an expansion of 35,000 low income adults to the OHP Standard program and an estimated 88,000 additional low income and disabled individuals expected in the OHP Plus program, which is federally mandated.

House Bill 2009 contains a number of sequenced health reform steps aimed at reducing the growing cost of health care and bringing more efficiency and transparency to the system. Some reforms included in the bill are steps to streamline state health care agencies into one Oregon Health Authority, governed by a citizen-led Health Policy Board; simplify and standardize the transactions between medical providers and insurance carriers; and require the collection of all medical claims data to give consumers tools to compare the cost and quality of their health care.

Bill Thorndike, Chair of the Health Fund Board, praised the collaborative work between the Oregon House and Senate in crafting the legislation, "The depth of experience in both the House and the Senate is what ultimately brought together a complex set of initiatives into two very practical bills that will advance health reform dramatically."

The companion bills were developed as a two-track approach that recognized that expanding coverage without controlling costs is unsustainable. With the enactment of both bills, Board Vice-Chair Eileen Brady sees a natural fit with health reform discussions taking place at the national level. "More and more we are hearing from Washington that rising health care costs must be addressed as a part of national health reform. Oregon will be leading the way with the passage of HB 2116 and HB 2009."