



AGENDA COVER MEMO

Memorandum Date: October 23, 2024

Order Date: November 5, 2024

TO: Board of County Commissioners
Sitting as the Board of Health

DEPARTMENT: Department of Health & Human Services

PRESENTED BY: Eve R. Gray, Director, Lane County H&HS

AGENDA ITEM TITLE:

In the Matter of Considering a Resolution for Presentation to the Oregon Legislature and the Governor Voicing Support for the Work of the Universal Health Plan Governance Board.

I. MOTION

In the Matter of Considering a Resolution for Presentation to the Oregon Legislature and the Governor voicing support for the work of the Universal Health Plan Governance Board.

II. AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

III. BACKGROUND/IMPLICATIONS OF ACTION

A. Board Action and Other History

The BCC has established its ability to also Sit as the Board of Health. The BCC, sitting as the BoH, has been involved in the adoption of the Community Health via BO 21-01-26-07.

Most recently, via BO 24-01-09-02, the BCC submitted a Resolution to the National Association of Counties regarding the need for parity improvements with respect to the reimbursement for mental health services (The Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act).

B. Policy Issues

The US health insurance system is complicated, inequitable, and inefficient. Looking at alternative approaches has the potential to improve care delivery, improve access to care, and save money. The Universal Health Plan Governance Board is a legislatively created body that is currently completing the design work for a universal health plan that could cover Oregon residents and serve as an alternative to the current system.

C. Board Goals

Universal access to health coverage improves the public's health, which supports the Board's strategic plan priority 1: Safe and Healthy County.

D. Financial and/or Resource Considerations

None based on this resolution, except authorizing staff time to participate in committee meetings. Financial implications of any universal health plan system will become clear as the governance board subcommittees perform their work. An independent actuarial firm reviewed initial plans for a universal health plan in Oregon and estimated it would save \$1 billion annually, mostly due to decreased administrative burdens in the provision of healthcare.

E. Health Implications

Individual wellbeing and public health both benefit when all members of a community have real, meaningful access to health care. A universal health plan would assure every resident of Oregon has access to comprehensive healthcare with no out of pocket costs for accessing care. Too often, people delay or forgo care due to cost, which worsens health overall. Universal access to affordable care is an important community-level intervention for improving health.

F. Analysis

Given the potential societal benefits of a universal health plan, as well as the potential implications (positive or negative) to Lane County as a healthcare provider if the system of reimbursement for care changes, it makes sense for Lane County to be actively engaged in the process of designing a universal health plan for Oregon. Given the unknowns, it does not yet make sense for the Board of Commissioners to endorse a universal health plan as the correct approach for the state. Instead, the Board is being asked to endorse the work to design a universal health plan for Oregon as a potential approach to improving access, equity, and affordability of healthcare, and to direct county staff to be involved in the design work.

G. Alternatives/Options

1. Endorse the remitting of the Resolution as presented
2. Endorse the remitting of the Resolution with revisions
3. Decline to take this Action at this time

IV. RECOMMENDATION

The Department of Health and Human Services endorses the remittance of this Resolution, as set forth in this agenda item.

V. TIMING/IMPLEMENTATION

If approved, staff will move forward with the delivery of the Resolution, as directed by this Action.

VI. FOLLOW-UP

Dependent upon responses received and/or actions taken by the receiving public entities.

VII. ATTACHMENTS

- A. Resolution and Order
- B. Draft Community Resolution

BEFORE THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF LANE COUNTY, OREGON

ORDER/RESOLUTION
NO: 24-11-05-04

IN THE MATTER OF SUBMITTING A
RESOLUTION TO THE OREGON
LEGISLATURE AND THE GOVERNOR

WHEREAS, the County has adopted as a strategic priority the promotion of a Safe and Healthy County; and

WHEREAS, the County is the Local Public Health Authority and recognizes its responsibility to inform regarding issues that result in inadequate and/or inequitable promotion of the public's health; and

WHEREAS, the County recognizes the importance of comprehensive health plan coverage and, within the Resolution sets forth the importance of the promotion of universal coverage;

NOW, THEREFORE, the Board of County Commissioners of Lane County **ORDERS** as follows:

1. Resolution in Support of State and Federal Legislative Action to Plan a Publicly Financed Universal Healthcare System (Attachment A), shall, by this Action, be remitted to the Oregon Legislature and the Governor, on behalf of this body.

ADOPTED this 5th day of November, 2024.

Laurie Trieger, Chair
Lane County Board of Commissioners

RESOLUTION NO. 24-11-05-04

Resolution in Support of State and Federal Legislative Action to Plan a Publicly Financed Universal Healthcare System.

The Lane County Board of Commissioners find:

- A. Whereas, it is impossible for an individual to live a productive, healthy life without access to quality health care.
- B. Whereas, individual wellbeing and public health both benefit when all members of a community have real, meaningful access to health care: the risk of illness from contagious disease decreases; employee and student absenteeism decreases, which is positive for students, employees, and businesses alike; and, individuals and families are less likely to experience financial vulnerability, bankruptcy, and homelessness.
- C. Whereas, our current healthcare system requires complex, costly, and time-consuming billing and administrative systems. Lane County Health and Human Services Department would gain significant savings in administrative time and billing with a publicly financed universal plan.
- D. Whereas, investments to address social determinants of health and other preventive measures will produce better health outcomes than administrative spending.
- E. Whereas, the current system of healthcare perpetuates historical oppression by reinforcing unequal health outcomes for historically marginalized communities through systemic inequalities in access to and quality of health care.
- F. Whereas, in 2019 the Oregon Legislature passed SB 770 which established the Joint Task Force on Universal Health Care to design a universal, publicly funded health care system. The Task Force found that a universal health care system could save money while delivering care to all Oregon residents without decreasing provider compensation. The Task Force recommended a Governance Board to complete the design of a universal plan.
- G. Whereas, in the 2021 the Oregon legislature passed SJR 12 as a referral to voters to declare healthcare access as a fundamental right in the Oregon Constitution. Oregon voters passed it as Measure 111 in November 2022.
- H. Whereas, in 2023 the Oregon Legislature passed SB 1089 to establish the Governance Board for a universal health care, which is to complete the design, determine costs, and propose resources for a publicly funded universal healthcare plan by September 15, 2026.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Lane County Board of Commissioners expresses its support for researching and designing a model for a state funded universal healthcare system in Oregon. It directs the County Administrator to deliver letters and copies of this resolution to the Oregon Legislature and Governor voicing support for the work of the Universal Health Plan Governance Board.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Commissioners sees Lane County's participation in the design and review of any universal healthcare system as essential to success.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Lane County Board of Commissioners will direct the Health and Human Services Department to participate in the Universal Health Plan Governance Board, providing feedback to assure that the County's program needs are met.

ADOPTED this 5th day of November, 2024

REVIEWED:

By: Lane County Board of Commissioners

Authorized Signer