

## Info for Legislative Constituent Contact Teams

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The most important activity related to single payer healthcare in Oregon at this time is the Task Force on Universal Health Care and its related Technical Advisory Groups (TAGs).

- Information about the Task Force can be found at <https://apps.oregonlegislature.gov/liz/201911/Committees/JTFUHC/Overview>.
- Information about the TAGs can be found at <https://www.oregon.gov/oha/hpa/hp/pages/task-force-universal-health-care.aspx>.
- You can subscribe to get email updates about what is happening with the Task Force or the TAGs by following a link near the upper right on the respective page ([e-Subscribe Email](#) for the Task Force, Subscribe to notices or [https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/ORDHS/subscriber/new?topic\\_id=ORDHS\\_921](https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/ORDHS/subscriber/new?topic_id=ORDHS_921) for the TAGs)

There are several legislative concepts that will soon be introduced as bills that are very important to us in this session. In order for the Task Force to best succeed, it is also important that Congress acts on something like the State Based Universal Health Care Act at some point prior to Oregon implementing a universal health care system, so that system can be closer to an equitable and affordable single payer system. Thus this document includes information about that.

### **Legislative concepts of highest importance for the 2021 legislative session**

**LC 1794 (Task Force timeline extension)** – this is a simple bill being championed by Sen. James Manning that extends the timeline of the Task Force, so that a report of its findings and recommendations is due for the 2022 legislative session rather than the 2021 session. This gives the Task Force about 8 more months to do its work. It is clear that there is a lot of work to do, and that it would not be possible to accomplish the public engagement intended by SB 770 without this extra time. Even with this extra time, the timeline is short.

This timeline extension was introduced in the 2020 session, but like nearly every other bill that session, the Republican walkout killed it.

**Recommend Actions** – contact your legislators and ask them to support extending the timeline of the Task Force, and ask them to support a budget for the Legislative Policy and Research Office and the Oregon Health Authority that provides sufficient funds to appropriately support the Task Force.

**LC 809 (HOPE amendment)** – the HOPE amendment would add to the Oregon constitution that health care is a fundamental right. In particular, it states

*SECTION 47. (1) It is the obligation of the state to ensure that every resident of Oregon has access to cost-effective, clinically appropriate and affordable health care as a fundamental right.*

*(2) The obligation of the state described in subsection (1) of this section must be balanced against the public interest in funding public schools and other essential public services, and any remedy arising from an action brought against the state to enforce the provisions of this section may not interfere with the balance described in this subsection.*

This amendment had been championed by the late Rep. Mitch Greenlick, and we supported it in the 2019 and 2020 sessions. The bill, introduced by Rep. Rob Nosse, would send this to the 2022 general election ballot.

**Recommend Actions** – contact your legislators and ask them to support the HOPE amendment, which would make it an obligation of the state to ensure that affordable access to healthcare is a fundamental right.

**The State Based Universal Health Care Act** – this is not in the state legislature, but is a bill that is in the U.S. Congress as [H.R. 5010](#). Reps. Blumenaur, Bonamici, and DeFazio are cosponsors. We want them to be cosponsors of a similar bill in the next Congress, and for them to be champions of the concept. The bill would authorize various Cabinet Secretaries and the Director of the Office of Personnel Management to waive federal provisions as requested by a state that is trying to establish a universal health care system. The waivers would make it more likely that such a system could be closer to an equitable and affordable single payer system.

**Recommend Actions** – contact your U.S. representative and encourage them to cosponsor a State Based Universal Health Care Act in the next Congress. If you are contacting Blumenaur, Bonamici, or DeFazio, thank them for cosponsoring it in the last Congress, and ask them to do so again. Encourage them to push harder for its passage. Contact both Oregon Senators and ask them to support a similar effort in the Senate.

### **Other bills**

There is likely to be a proposal that OSPIRG is calling a public option. We have not yet seen the language of the bill, so we are unable to evaluate it at this point. We suspect that it is not really a public option, but rather may involve buying in to private Coordinated Care Organizations (CCOs).

If you have a copy of proposed bill language for a legislative concept on which you think HCAO-Action should take a stand, please sent it to [cswanee@msn.com](mailto:cswanee@msn.com).

*This information is prepared and sent to those who request it by the Legislative Committee of [HCAO-Action](#).*