

Oregon Legislature Approves Health Reform Legislation

Thank you message from the Health Fund Board:

So many people deserve recognition for the passage of landmark legislation that will launch the implementation of the Health Fund Board's plan, "Aim High: Building a Healthy Oregon". The Board's vision for comprehensive health reform in Oregon was crafted after over 100 public meetings and with citizen input from all corners of the state. With the passage of House Bill 2009 and House Bill 2116, implementation of the plan will soon begin to provide health coverage to 80,000 children and 35,000 additional vulnerable citizens while simultaneously undertaking an ambitious agenda to improve health care delivery and reduce medical inflation.

The Board acknowledges the hard work of the Oregon legislature who believed Oregon could achieve significant health reform in this session, and crafted a tandem approach with two bills encompassing the majority of the Board's recommendations (see comparison link). We also are grateful for the support of Governor Kulongoski and his staff in the budget process and the passage of the legislation.

The Office of Health Policy and Research has provided invaluable staffing and resources throughout the development of the plan, and the legislation would not have been possible without their long hours and dedication. All of the committee and workgroup members and especially the committee chairs are also to be commended for their time and energy, with many of those involved in the creation of the plan continuing to provide support in the legislative process.

We want to emphasize the importance of the United for a Healthy Oregon Coalition for their commitment to the passage of both HB 2009 and HB 2116. The partner organizations in the coalition represented the voices of over 800,000 Oregonians who knew that the time is now for health reform. And finally, many thanks to the health care industry stakeholders, the Oregon Association of Hospitals and Health Systems and the insurers who came forward to support a significant expansion of health coverage for Oregon's children and low-income adults.

The Oregon Health Fund Board and the Oregon Health Policy Commission will have completed their work upon the Governor's signing of HB 2009, and the new citizen Oregon Health Policy Board will be established to take the baton and continue moving Oregon forward in achieving the Triple Aim; improving the health of Oregonians, lowering the per-capita costs of health care and providing a better patient experience whenever people need health services. We have considered it an honor to serve Oregon in this extraordinary process of answering the questions and honoring the principles of The Healthy Oregon Act, SB 329.