



NEWS RELEASE

HEALTH FUND BOARD EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ANNOUNCES HIS TRANSITION

October 9, 2008

(Portland) -- Barney Speight has informed Governor Ted Kulongoski of his intention to leave his position as Executive Director of the Oregon Health Fund Board once the Board delivers its final report on reforming health care to the Governor and Legislature in late November.

"I am deeply grateful to Governor Kulongoski for his wise counsel, his unwavering support for the Board and for giving me the opportunity to be part of the state's health care reform efforts," Mr. Speight said.

"Today, with regret, I accept Barney's letter of resignation. His more than 30 years of expertise in health care policy have proven invaluable and he will be missed," said Governor Kulongoski. "Under Barney's leadership, the Board's report will be the first step in comprehensive health care reform to benefit all Oregonians. His replacement will need to be someone who can work with members of the Legislature and begin to shepherd the recommendations through the legislative process."

Governor Kulongoski appointed Mr. Speight in July 2007, following the passage of SB329 legislation that created and charged the Board with developing a comprehensive plan to insure access to health care and to contain health care costs for all Oregonians.

Signaling his firm belief in the Health Fund Board and its Plan, Mr. Speight noted, "I'm extremely proud of the Board's work. The final report will offer legislators a comprehensive, strategic plan that can transform Oregon's health care delivery system and expand access to affordable care for every Oregonian. It cannot be achieved in one legislative session, but it will lay a solid foundation for the future."

Speaking as the Board met Wednesday to begin finalizing its draft plan following a month of public comment. Mr. Speight explained that he based the timing of his announcement on two important considerations.

"I want to give the Governor ample time to name a new Director before Oregon lawmakers undertake the very important debate in January 2009, and to provide a smooth transition for the seven Board members over the next two months as they fine-tune their report and prepare for the significant conversation ahead on health care and its impact on every Oregonian and on our state."

The Governor hopes to appoint a replacement as the Board's Executive Director prior to the legislative session in January.

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