

Oregon Health Fund Board

Building a Healthy Oregon 

Aim High: Building a Healthy Oregon

Community Town Hall Forums
September 2008

Oregon Health Fund Board

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Since October 2007, the Board and its six committees and two workgroups have heard expert testimony, reviewed leading edge research, studied successful models in other states and countries, and listened to hundreds of Oregonians in community meetings across the state.

- Access: Over a half-million Oregonians don't have health insurance.
- Cost: Health care is increasingly unaffordable for Oregonians and Oregon businesses.
- Quality: The health care system is increasing in cost, *but* the *quality* isn't consistent.

So what's the problem? It's access, cost and quality.

What is access? It is your ability to see the healthcare provider you need, at the right time and at the right place. This happens for some of us, but is very difficult, if not impossible, for most of the half-million uninsured Oregonians.

Cost. Health care is too expensive and increasingly unaffordable for Oregonians and Oregon businesses: between 2000 and 2006, Oregonians' incomes went up about 19% [pause] **while family health insurance premiums went up about 75%.**

And we don't always get the quality we pay for. Oregon ranks #34th in the nation for quality of its health care system; it ranks 42nd for children's health care quality.

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Building a Healthy Oregon 

An Action Plan to Build a Healthy Oregon

This is what we are here to talk with you about tonight. This is where we want to hear from you.



Four Goals for Oregon

- Contain costs
- Provide health insurance for Oregon's uninsured
- Improve quality, safety, and efficiency in Oregon's health care systems
- Improve the health of all Oregonians

It became clear to Board members that almost every issue they tackled, connected back to one of these four goals.

Contain costs. If we want to achieve 100% access to coverage and care, then health care costs cannot continue to outstrip general inflation. This is true for every sector, public and private.

Provide health insurance: If we don't finance access to necessary health care, costs will continue to increase and tens of thousands will suffer.

Improving quality, safety and efficiency will help reduce costs and provide better results for patients.

Improve the health of all Oregonians. It's very important to the Board that this plan address much more than just the health care system. It must address the **health** of each of us and our communities.



What Should We Do?

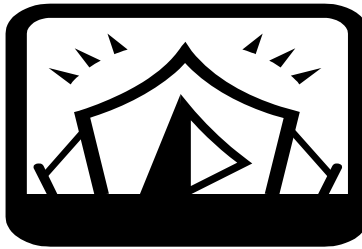
Eight Building Blocks to Lay a Solid Foundation for Health

We have identified eight building blocks to build a solid foundation for health. You can turn to the diagram in your hand out. Each one, by itself is not enough, but each block supports our building a secure and sustainable structure for a healthy Oregon.



1. Bring Everyone Under the Tent

Every Oregonian has access to affordable, quality health care.



This is the vision of the Board: “Every Oregonian has access to affordable, quality health care.”

But it needs to be done in stages. The first stage is to cover all children and very poor adults, which will reduce the number of uninsured in Oregon by one-third. In other words, another 200,000 people will have coverage by 2011.

As we strive for access to affordable, quality health care, we also envision an essential benefit package for every Oregonian.



2. Set High Standards

- Measure
- Report



The Board wants Oregon to set high quality standards for care and collect complete information about health care quality and costs, so we know the value of the care that the healthcare system is delivering.

We have a right to know. So do policymakers, businesses and others who pay for your health care.

This will allow communities to compare their health care system to others in the state or nation. This will enable consumers to make better decisions about their health care. This will help drive down costs and increase the quality of care.



3. Stimulate System Innovation and Improvement

Health care is local. The Board recognizes that communities are different – and therefore so are their needs. What works in Portland won't necessarily work in Grants Pass or Pendleton. The Board has provided for individual communities to do what works to keep those who live in that community healthy – at home, at work, at school.

There are common themes that hold it all together. Imagine an Oregon where:

- There are coordinated teams of healthcare providers who know you and your family:
- Where the emphasis is on prevention and primary care – where the focus is on keeping you healthy rather than waiting until you are sick;
- The best medical evidence is used for your care,
- And where there are safe and secure electronic health records to make sure your information is available at the right time and where you need it to be



4. Unify, Strengthen and Leverage our Purchasing Power



If the purchasers tell health plans, hospitals, physicians and other providers **WHAT** we want to buy, we will help drive down costs and get the quality we expect.

The Board recommends that the state lead the way and start doing this now. The state needs to be a smart purchaser, an instigator and an innovator. The Board looks forward to the State joining with the private sector to redesign the system and ensure affordable, high quality health care for all Oregonians.



5. Train a New Health Care Workforce



We don't have enough physicians or nurses to meet the needs of our growing population, so we need to look at others in healthcare who can team up with doctors and nurses to make sure you get the all the necessary care you need at the right time.

We need to ensure there is diversity in the health care workforce to match the increasing diversity in our state.

We need to examine how primary care providers are paid and we need to offer incentives for students to enter these fields. We also need more providers to work in rural areas in Oregon.



6. Ensure Health Equity for All



Not everyone has the same access to care. Where you live, what you look like, how much money you make, can all affect your access to care. Factors such as education, environment, and housing also impact our health.

The Board has outlined several recommendations to reduce health disparities in Oregon.



7. Advocate for Federal Changes

- Medicare
- Medicaid
- ERISA
- Federal Income Tax Code
- Workforce
- EMTALA
- HIPAA
- Indian Health Service Programs

The Board had a special committee look at how federal laws may present a barrier to improving our healthcare system in Oregon. These recommendations are included as a special section in the Plan. A summary outlining the areas we want our Congressional delegation to address in Washington DC is included in your handouts.

This is a bit of alphabet soup but details are described in the full action plan. But let me mention 2 or 3. The Board suggests improving Medicare reimbursement to Oregon providers, federal approval for expanding coverage in our Medicaid program, creating safe harbors to protect state health reform from lawsuits by self-insured employers.

(NOTE: ERISA is Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974.)



8. Establish an Oregon Health Authority

The Board feels that the establishment of an Oregon Health Authority is the fundamental support system for the other building blocks. The Authority is about Accountability. It consolidates existing structures in state government that deal with health, including this Board, and the Oregon Health Policy Commission.

Like citizen boards that make transportation and education more accountable, this authority would operate publicly to integrate and coordinate the multitude of healthcare functions going on at the moment.

This building block supports the rest of this plan and ensures that this plan will move forward in the future.



What's the Short-Term Impact?

- Oregonians will have the ability to compare cost and quality of health care services.
- Local innovation will be supported so that each community can solve its own health issues.
- Over 200,000 additional people will have access to affordable, quality health care by 2011.

What's the Short-Term Impact?

- Emphasize prevention and primary care
- Integrate mental health and addiction services with physical care
- Support and respect patients' end-of-life decisions

Prevention and primary care will be emphasized and appropriately paid for.

Mental health and addiction services will be integrated and coordinated with physical health.

Patient desires for end-of-life care will be supported.

What's the Long-Term Impact?

- Prevent chronic diseases like diabetes and heart failure before they start
- Reduce obesity, tobacco use and substance abuse
- Address health care workforce needs
- Adopt private, secure electronic medical records

Because they account for a majority of health care costs, we need to both prevent and better manage chronic conditions before they start.

The public's health will improve through investments targeted to reduce obesity, tobacco use and substance abuse.

Oregonians will have a health care workforce that is sufficient to meet the population's needs.

And private and secure electronic medical records will be in place, ensuring that your health information is available at the right time and where you need it to be, as well as reducing costs by reducing duplication and unnecessary tests.

What's the Long-Term Impact?

- Bring health care costs under control:
 - Reduce administrative costs
 - Improved consumer and purchaser information
 - Help people who don't have health insurance offered at work get affordable coverage

Spiraling health care costs will be brought under control:

Administrative cost will be reduced by simplifying and standardizing processes.

Uniform data collection and public reporting will provide comparable information for consumers and purchasers.

And ultimately, people without insurance provided through an employer will have access to quality affordable health insurance through a health insurance exchange.



So What Are the Proposed Financing Strategies?

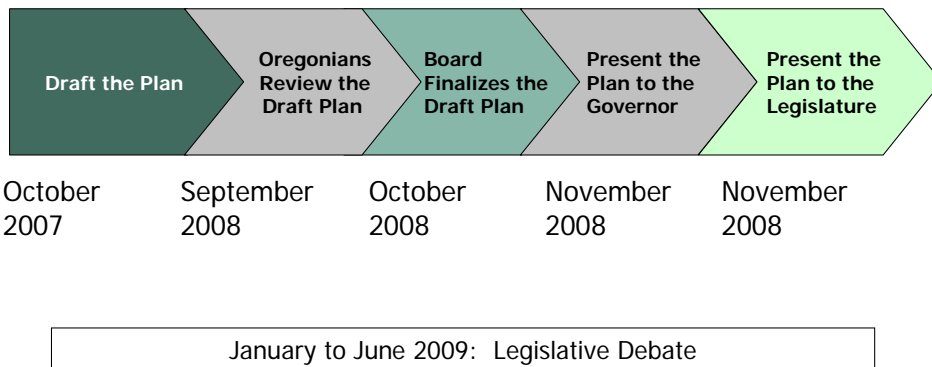
- We recommend that the Legislature look at several financing methods for these investments.
 - Revamp Oregon's current provider tax to pay for health care for children and very poor adults and capture more than \$1 billion in federal funds.
 - Increase taxes on tobacco and alcoholic beverages for public health initiatives.
 - Enact a payroll tax to finance coverage for ALL working Oregonians whose employers don't offer coverage

The Board's finance committee analyzed multiple financing strategies.

Before we end this conversation, we want to emphasize one important fact: each of us currently pays for health care for the uninsured in the state, but it's HIDDEN and inefficient. Since 2000, hospital uncompensated care has increased almost 400%. But this care ISN'T UNCOMPENSATED IN THE LONG RUN. Hospitals increase their rates to cover these losses. These increased rates get passed onto insurance companies, who in turn increase premiums that we all pay. Because of this dynamic, many Oregonians are one paycheck or one rate increase away from becoming uninsured themselves.



Now What?



The Board and over 100 volunteers have come a long way in accomplishing what the Legislature asked of them. Their collective work will set an important stage for the next steps.

Now the Board wants to hear your comments and ideas to improve our plan

Based on what they hear from all of you, the Board will review and finalize the action plan in October.

This report will frame the health care agenda for the 2009 Legislative session.

Now I will turn over to our moderator to explain now the comment period will go tonight.



Protocol for the Evening

1. "Seek first to understand, before being understood." Dialogue is about inquiry and learning.
2. Speak for yourself and from your own experience as much as possible. Try to avoid generalizations.
3. Share the floor with your fellow participants. Avoid repeating questions or comments that have already been offered.

Building a Healthy Oregon: The 8 Essential Building Blocks

1. "Bring Everyone Under the Tent"

2. Set High Standards – Measure and Report

3. Stimulate System Innovation & Improvement

4. Unify Purchasing Power

5. Health Care
Workforce

6. Health
Equity for All

7. Federal
Advocacy

8. Oregon Health Authority



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