



Senator Chris Telfer

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House approves Telfer priority bill providing Oregonians with access to affordable healthcare

Salem, OR – An innovative solution to rising numbers of uninsured and increasing healthcare costs unanimously passed the House floor Wednesday afternoon, 54 to 0.

Senate Bill 862 would empower communities to provide workers with access to health care services by forging partnerships between employers, employees and community providers. Senate Bill 862 is now on its way to the Governor's desk for a signature.

"This bill gives communities a new tool to help insure workers who don't have healthcare," said Senator Chris Telfer (R-Bend), the sponsor of the legislation. "This bill builds on a model that works, providing an opportunity for local entities to partner together and work towards lowering the cost of healthcare and insuring more individuals."

The bill would allow Oregon communities to follow the successful model of *Access Health* in Muskegon, Michigan. Using what is called a "multi-share model," employers, employees and the community at-large help contribute to the overall cost of health services. There are now nearly a dozen multi-share programs across the nation.

The multi-share model supported by this bill dovetails with a new federal State Health Access Program announced Tuesday. The program offers grants of up to \$10 million a year to help states that are ready to implement innovative programs designed to provide the uninsured with access to affordable health care coverage. With the passage of SB 862, Oregon has demonstrated the required statutory and regulatory changes to qualify for a portion of the grant.

If this bill is signed by the Governor, employees who have been unable to buy health insurance will have access to affordable and necessary health care services. Providers like hospitals and doctors would be able to cut down on expensive emergency care to the uninsured, for which they often don't see reimbursement. By offering preventative care and basic health services, the uninsured, employers and doctors all would benefit.

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