



Oregon

Oregon Health Fund Board
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December 6, 2007

The Federal Laws Committee (Committee) of the Oregon Health Fund Board (Board) invites you to participate in its work to determine how federal laws impact Oregon's efforts at health care reform and to propose solutions for removing barriers to reform.

Senate Bill 329, Section 9.(1) charges the Committee with reporting on the impact of federal law requirements on achieving the Board's goals, focusing particularly on barriers to reducing the number of uninsured Oregonians. In particular, the Committee will examine the following Federal policy domains:

- 1) Medicaid requirements relating to such areas as: eligibility categories, household income limits, Medicaid waivers, Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs), and reimbursement for training of health professionals; and related policy areas including the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) and the Family Health Insurance Assistance Program (FHIAP);
- 2) Medicare requirements including issues related to Medicare Advantage Plans as well as policies "that result in Oregon's health care providers receiving significantly less than the national average Medicare reimbursement rate," including:
 - o How such Medicare policies and procedures affect costs, quality and access;
 - o How an increase in Medicare reimbursement rates to Oregon providers would benefit Oregon in health care costs, quality and access to services, including improved access for persons with disabilities and improved access to long term care;
- 3) Employment Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA) requirements and the extent to which it is clear what state action is permissible without further federal courts decisions;
- 4) Federal tax code policies "regarding the impact on accessing health insurance or self-insurance and the affect on the portability of health insurance;"
- 5) Emergency Medical Treatment and Active Labor Act (EMTALA) regulations "that make the delivery of health care more costly and less efficient" and EMTALA waivers;
- 6) Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) requirements that may hinder coordination of care; and
- 7) Any other area of federal policy that inhibits Oregon's ability to move forward with health care reform efforts.

Beginning in January, the Committee will hold a series of four or five meetings to discuss these specific topics. Meetings will include panels of stakeholders to provide input and participate in discussions about the limitations federal laws impose and to identify reasonable recommendations for changes to federal law.

The tentative schedule for these meetings is below:

Committee meetings with panel discussions

Week of January 21:	Medicaid
Mid-Late February:	Medicare
Mid-Late March:	ERISA and federal tax code policies
Mid April:	EMTALA, HIPAA and other areas of federal policy
Possible meeting mid May:	Other issues to be determined

The Committee will use the written comments and oral testimony to develop findings and recommendations. The resulting report will be subject to approval by the Board. During the summer of 2008, the report will be presented in a series of public meetings to include locations in each of the five congressional districts. Public comments will be incorporated into the final report which will be delivered to Oregon's congressional delegation, along with a request for congressional hearings in Washington, DC.

The Committee seeks your assistance as follows:

1. Send written comments (with supporting documentation, if available) relating to the policy domain(s) of interest noted above no later than Friday, January 18, 2008. In addition to identifying barriers to reform efforts, the Committee encourages you to propose concrete solutions to these barriers. **Please send your written comments to:**

**Barney Speight, Director
Oregon Health Fund Board
Federal Laws Committee
1225 Ferry St. SE
Salem, OR 97301
Email: barney.speight@state.or.us**

2. Contact Susan Otter by Friday December 21, 2007, if your organization would like to participate in the Committee's panel presentation on Medicaid, or by Friday, January 11, 2008, if your organization would like to participate on one of other panel presentations. Priority will be given to those individuals and organizations that provide written comments. **Susan can be reached at:**

**Susan Otter, Policy Analyst
Oregon Health Fund Board
Federal Laws Committee
Office: 503-373-0859
Email: susan.otter@state.or.us**

[Note: Individuals and organizations not selected for panel presentations will have the opportunity to provide testimony during the public comment period of each meeting. In addition, all written comments received during the Committee's deliberations will be summarized for the Committee members and included in the public record of the Committee.]

The Committee strongly encourages you to include your voice in the discussion.

Thank you for considering this request. If you have any questions, please contact Committee staff: Susan Otter at 503-373-0859, susan.otter@state.or.us.

Sincerely,

Frank Baumeister, MD
Chair, Federal Laws Committee
Oregon Health Fund Board

Ellen Gradison
Vice Chair, Federal Laws Committee
Oregon Health Fund Board