

Testimony in Support of SB1046
The Health Care For All Oregon Plan
Senate Healthcare Committee
April 20, 2017
Submitted by: Mary Lou Hennrich

Chair Monnes Anderson, Vice-Chair Kruse, Senators, my name is Mary Lou Hennrich. I am a retired nurse and public health administrator with a 45-year career working to improve the health and lives of Oregon residents —especially the poorest and most vulnerable. I have often visited you during my tenure at Multnomah County, CareOregon, and The Oregon Public Health Institute.

When I retired in 2014, I breathed a sigh of relief-- my days of rushing to Salem to inform you about many health related issues were finally OVER! From prevention policies and funding, to disease treatments, healthcare financing, and delivery system reform, I believed I had done my part and when asked to continue formal advocacy efforts I said, “NO, I am retired and leaving this work to the next generation!”

I remarried, spent time with grandchildren, supported women legislative candidates, traveled and enjoyed focusing on my family’s health and neighborhood activities--including social justice issues through my church.

St. Michael and All Angels Episcopal is a diverse congregation that puts faith into action, and is an active member of the **Healthcare for All Oregon Coalition (HCAO)**. I approached several times to become more involved in their efforts **advocating for publicly funded Universal Healthcare for All who reside in Oregon**, I made some donations, but kept my distance and continued to say, “no.”

After marrying David Still from Eastern Oregon, and finding that he was active in HCAO Union County, I decided now was the time to stop whining about the unfair, ineffective, expensive and unsustainable healthcare mess we find ourselves in, and join the growing grassroots movement to establish **Universal Healthcare in Oregon**. Our current healthcare “non-system” with its ever-rising costs to individuals, employers, employees, local, state and federal governments is unsustainable! The health and happiness of our children, grandchildren and future generations is in serious jeopardy. So, before I quite knew what I was volunteering

for, I found myself joining St. Michael's HCAO group and becoming the Faith Caucus representative to the HCAO Board.

With the legislative leadership of Senator Dembrow and others, HCAO continues its efforts to develop and advance a workable concept for a **publicly funded, universal healthcare system for ALL Oregon residents, SB 1046.**

The well-informed panelists who will speak today will present the basic framework of the bill--What it is, why we need it, how it will work, and why the time to make it a reality is NOW.

You will hear from healthcare providers, business owners, representatives of labor, academic healthcare leaders, patients, health policy experts, and social justice advocates. Each panelist will make a short presentation on various aspects of the issues we face as we work to achieve our goal.

We realize you may have questions and/or concerns that we cannot fully answer today. HCAO and its individual members and 120+member organizations from across the state stand ready to continue the dialog with you and your fellow legislators in the coming months.

As my long time mentor, Tom Higgins told me many years ago—"Mary Lou, your job is to speak truth to power!" Now that I am retired and no longer paid by any "special interest," I believe I can truly do this. That is why I am here today.

The ONLY answer is a publicly funded, single payer, universal healthcare system for All Oregon residents. The time for remodeling is past—it is time to think boldly and rebuild!

Thank you for allowing us this opportunity today and feel free to contact me, or my fellow advocates anytime with your questions, concerns or ideas. We are all in this together!