



About the Oregon Health Fund Board

Created by SB 329 (the Healthy Oregon Act), the Oregon Health Fund Board is a 7 member board appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Oregon Senate. The Board is developing a comprehensive plan to ensure access to health care for all Oregonians, contain health care costs, and address issues of quality in health care. The members of the Board have experience, knowledge and expertise in the areas of consumer advocacy, management, finance, labor and health care, and represent the geographic and ethnic diversity of the state. Barney Speight, Executive Director, and the staff of the Office for Oregon Health Policy and Research assist the Board.

OHFB Board Members

- **Bill Thorndike, Chair**
CEO, Medford Fabrication
- **Jonathan Ater, Vice-Chair**
Chair and Senior Partner, Ater Wynne LLP
- **Eileen Brady, Vice-Chair**
Co-Owner, New Seasons Market
- **Tom Chamberlain**
President, Oregon AFL-CIO
- **Charles Hofmann, MD**
Physician
- **Ray Miao**
State President
AARP Oregon
- **Marcus Mundy**
President, Urban League of Portland

[Board Meeting Calendar:](#)

Thursday, July 24

9:30 am to 5 pm
Oregon Medical Association
11740 SW 68th Parkway, #100
Portland, OR

Committees have Recommended, Communities have Spoken – Now the Board's Work Begins

By Barney Speight, Executive Director

The work of drafting a comprehensive plan for quality affordable health care in Oregon has moved to a new stage.

Since I last wrote in the June newsletter, Oregon has reached two important milestones in the health reform journey, chartered by the 2007 Legislature:

- The Oregon Health Fund Board now has the final recommendations from five ⁽¹⁾ of its six committees and its two work groups; *and*
- Board members finished a 15-city listening tour, attending a series of community meetings designed to let the Board hear what Oregonians think and value about health and health care.

We are grateful to the Oregon Health Forum, Northwest Health Foundation and Oregon Health Decisions for conceiving and conducting these meetings during May and June so board members and staff would know the core values and top priorities of a diverse mix of Oregonians across the state. Over 1200 people attended. We will receive their report later this month. An early summary indicates that Oregonians are well-versed in the issues and language of health reform, are optimistic that together we can reform health care, and are willing to make trade-offs to ensure access, quality and affordability.

The Board could not have reached this important point in its journey without the untold hours that hundreds of Oregonians gave serving on committees, giving us the benefit of their expertise and drafting recommendations to move this process forward.

The seven Board members will spend the rest of the summer drafting a viable plan for action that encompasses the work of the past 13 months – SB 329, committee recommendations, national expert testimony, and citizen input. They will take both a pragmatic and a long-term approach.

To assist them in this ambitious task, I have laid out a framework to guide their discussion and decision-making. Entitled "[Director's Straw Person Plan](#)," it provides a frame for thinking about change. The Straw Person embodies Oregon's vision of transformation, reflecting both the pragmatic steps and staged approach we will need to realistically reach our long-term goals.

⁽¹⁾ In July, the Federal Laws committee will report on the impact of federal policy on health reform in Oregon.

. . . Board's Work Begins (cont.)

That vision is:

- Fewer than 5% of Oregonians are without health care coverage
- The annual rate of increase in health care costs has been maintained at CPI + 1%-2% for the previous 5 consecutive years
- Oregon meets or exceeds every major national quality benchmark (both acute & ambulatory)
- Oregon leads the nation in key population health benchmarks ... across all population subgroups

I believe that we can make significant progress over the next three years - two legislative sessions - laying a foundation and taking the "first best steps" toward our long-term vision and collective well being.

The framework document reflects the Board's belief that we must proceed on two parallel tracks – (1) reversing the trend that has health care costs far outpacing the growth of the economy– the *key to securing coverage* for the 84% of Oregonians who currently have health insurance – and (2) guaranteeing access to coverage for the 16% of uninsured Oregonians.

It also addresses the fact that we must begin transforming our health care delivery system. We cannot continue to pay for a broken system built at the beginning of the last century. It isn't designed to best serve us in today's world, given today's realities.

The next steps in our process:

The Board will meet on *July 24* and *August 5* to produce the draft plan. If necessary, the Board also will meet on August 27. The draft plan then will be widely distributed for public comment.

Throughout September, the Board will receive feedback on the draft plan through public forums across the state, meetings with stakeholder groups, and an electronic survey.

In October, the Board will refine and finalize the plan in preparation for submission to the Governor and legislative leadership in *November*. Oregon's Congressional Delegation will receive a special report outlining the impact of Federal laws on reforming health care at the state level.

The plan will be submitted to the Oregon Legislative Assembly when it convenes in *January 2009*. The Board then will join Oregonians in urging lawmakers to take the 'next best steps.'

We look forward to your continued support for this important effort on behalf of all Oregonians.

Contact Information

Executive Director Barney Speight and the staff of the Oregon Health Fund Board can be reached at:

1225 Ferry Street, SE, 1st Floor

Salem, OR 97301

Phone: 503-373-1538

Fax: 503-378-5511

Web: <http://healthfundboard.oregon.gov>

Email: OHFB.INFO@state.or.us