

FIXING THE HEALTH CARE SYSTEM: Our first focus must be on health.

As a society, we do a good job of taking care of people when they are sick. But we don't put the same emphasis on preventing people from getting sick – even though we know how.

We can break this cycle. We must transform our system from one focused on disease-based care to one that equally values and rewards health. Affordable access for everyone to a defined set of benefits – including those that keep people well – will bring the change we need. Everyone deserves the opportunity to be healthy.



A focus on health and wellness will improve the quality of life for many people. It will also bring down the cost

of health care. For example, screening for cancer and treating it early costs a fraction of treating late-stage cancer. This is true for most diseases. Why don't we do this?

One reason is because people delay seeking care. They don't have health insurance, can't afford their co-pays or never received adequate health education. They wait until they are very ill. Sadly, this results in avoidable health complications and preventable deaths. It is also the most costly approach to health care.

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How will Oregon afford to pay for universal access to health care and wellness? The more pressing question is: how can we afford not to? Doing nothing will continue to drive the costs higher – measured both in human suffering and dollars. Changing our current system won't be easy. But if we work together, the solution is within reach.

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