



2026 policy agenda

Do no harm

This is a defining moment for health care in Oregon.

Hospitals are on the brink of failure, patients are struggling to access care, and federal changes will disrupt Oregon's Medicaid program.

The federal changes ahead will further destabilize a financially fragile health care system, highlighting the importance of acting swiftly. Oregonians need policies that support hospitals so they can continue to care for patients, employ frontline workers, and support the Oregon economy.



Protect access to health care for patients and communities



Do no more harm—fix the hospital staffing law



Protect the integrity of Oregon's presumptive eligibility law

In 2026, the Oregon Legislature should:



Protect access to health care for patients and communities

Oregon's health care system is in crisis now, and federal changes in H.R. 1 will make things worse. Oregon increased health insurance coverage through Medicaid (Oregon Health Plan) but did not provide adequate payment to providers who serve those patients. The gap between what it costs to provide care and what Medicaid pays hospitals and doctors is widening. Payments that don't cover the cost of care and rising costs create impossible choices: Cuts to services, layoffs, and long wait times for patients.

Oregon must protect its investments—and the federal dollars they leverage—in:

- Maternity care
- Hospital services low-income and vulnerable Oregonians need
- Training dollars for Oregon providers
- Benefits that support recovery after a hospitalization



Do no more harm—fix the hospital staffing law

The Oregon Health Authority has struggled with the hospital staffing law, making implementation more difficult than it needs to be for hospitals and health care workers. OHA's processes led to the targeted, urgently needed fixes during the 2025 regular session, but more is left to do. The learning phase that hospitals and staff were expecting prior to enforcement was not long enough, and the complaint process is diverting staff time and resources from patient care. Changes should be made to:

- Return to the 2023 bill as the coalition originally intended
- Pause penalties to allow time for OHA to enforce the law as the coalition intended
- Make reasonable improvements to support all rural hospitals



Protect the integrity of Oregon's presumptive eligibility law

The current screening tools available cannot accurately and reliably verify patients' eligibility for financial assistance. As a result, the presumptive eligibility process has resulted in free or reduced cost hospital care for some high-income earners and others with financial wealth.

For people who have insurance and are not on a state medical assistance program such as Medicaid, this proposal focuses presumptive eligibility on those who have larger hospital bills, providing them with relief early in the financial assistance process. Patients who owe more than \$1,500 for a single hospital encounter will be screened for presumptive eligibility.

Patients who owe any amount may still apply for financial assistance.

In this moment, we need to focus on access to care, keeping hospitals open, protecting jobs, and making sure Oregonians can get the health care they need.