

THEODORE R. KULONGOSKI
Governor

July 19, 2005

The Honorable Karen Minnis
Speaker of the House
900 Court Street NE – Rm. 269
Salem OR 97301

I am returning Enrolled House Bill 2480 unsigned and disapproved.

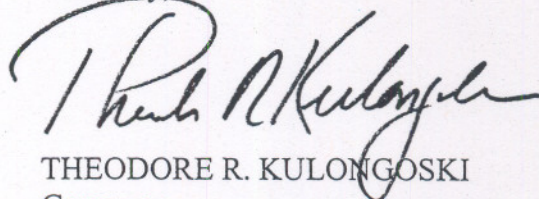
Since I took office, I have been advocating to strengthen the Department of Human Services' (DHS's) ability to effectively manage the Oregon Health Plan's (OHP's) fee-for-service prescription drug program. In my view, effective management requires not only financial accountability, but also the optimization of patient care. When those objectives are achieved, the state is not only able to provide appropriate medical care to existing OHP clients; it is also able to maximize the number of people to which it can provide health coverage – a public policy that benefits all Oregonians.

Existing statutory limitations already compromise the state's ability to most effectively manage the OHP fee-for-service drug benefit. As my office has written to you in previous letters, HB 2480 would further inhibit the state's ability to effectively manage that benefit.

DHS currently provides effective treatments for people on the Oregon Health Plan with hepatitis C infection. Their program is consistent with the clinical guidelines established by national experts and the administrative procedures used by Oregon's health insurers. HB 2480 could prevent DHS from continuing to effectively manage their prescription drug program for the treatment of hepatitis C in a manner that ensures that patients most likely to benefit from treatment receive the appropriate medications.

People on the Oregon Health Plan are some of our most vulnerable citizens. It is imperative that everyone on the Oregon Health Plan, regardless of their illness or social circumstances, receive the best medical care possible. It is my obligation, indeed our collective obligation, to ensure that *everyone* on the Oregon Health Plan receives the appropriate medical care.

Sincerely,



THEODORE R. KULONGOSKI
Governor

GTK:EKS/sh