

BEFORE THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON

RESOLUTION NO. 09-098

Urging Immediate Passage of Comprehensive Federal Health Reform Legislation

The Multnomah County Board of Commissioner Finds:

- a. Experts from across the political spectrum agree that America's health system is "broken" and unsustainable in its present configuration.
- b. Families in Multnomah County are experiencing this crisis right now, confronting the high cost of health care that threatens their financial stability, leaves them exposed to higher premiums and deductibles, and puts them at risk for a possible loss of health insurance.
- c. Employer-sponsored health insurance premiums have nearly doubled in recent years making it increasingly difficult for employers, including county governments, to provide health insurance coverage for their employees and retirees.
- d. Millions of Americans do not have health coverage, or have inadequate coverage and as our economic challenges multiply, the problem of health care access grows, further straining counties' capacity to provide care for the uninsured, under insured and medically indigent.
- e. 16.5% of adults in the county lacked health insurance in 2007 and the county's unemployment rate currently exceeds 11%, a growing proportion of county residents do not have access to affordable health care.
- f. County officials are elected to protect the health and welfare of their constituents.
- g. It cost the County \$61.5 million to meet health obligations in the community, including \$19 million for public health, \$14 million for indigent care, \$13 million for corrections health, \$1.5 million for local Medicaid match; and \$14 million for mental health and addiction obligations.
- h. The National Association of Counties (NACo) Health System Reform Working Group, appointed by President Don Stapley in July 2008 and chaired by President-Elect Valerie Brown, has held three regional hearings to explore the health crisis and to hear what county officials believe should be done about it and has summarized its findings in *Restoring the Partnership for American Health: Counties in a 21st Century Health System* which was approved and adopted by resolution of the NACo Health Steering Committee and Board of Directors on March 9, 2009.

The Multnomah County Board of Commissioner Resolves:

1. To endorse NACo's health reform principles, as summarized in *Restoring the Partnership for American Health: Counties in a 21st Century Health System*; namely, that reform legislation should:
 - restore the partnership between county and federal governments;
 - provide access to affordable, quality health care to all;
 - invest in public health, including health promotion and disease and injury prevention;
 - stabilize and strengthen the local health care safety net system;
 - invest in the development of the health professional and paraprofessional workforce;
 - ensure that county health agencies have the resources to meaningfully use health information technology;
 - enable elderly and disabled persons to receive the services they need in the least restrictive environment; and
 - reform the delivery and financing of health services in the jail system.
2. The Board believes that a single payer system would provide the best access to affordable health care for all Americans.
3. The Board strongly urges the 111th Congress of the United States to enact comprehensive health reform legislation without delay before the end of its first session.

ADOPTED this 16th day of July, 2009.

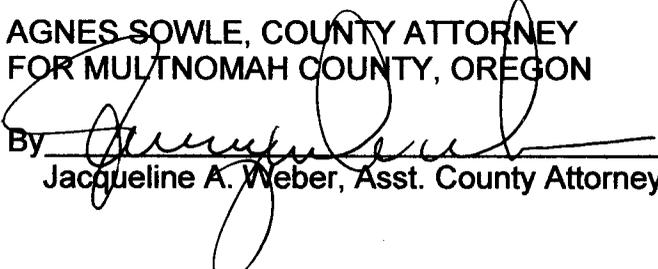


BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON


Ted Wheeler, Chair

REVIEWED:

AGNES SOWLE, COUNTY ATTORNEY
FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON

By 
Jacqueline A. Weber, Asst. County Attorney

SUBMITTED BY:

Lillian Shirley, Director, Multnomah County Health Department