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Oregon businesses depending on health system changes

Oregon business leaders say they see promising signs that the state Legislature will make changes now to help lower the cost of health care and also make it easier for businesses to get coverage for their employees.

Eileen Brady is a co-owner of two companies in the Portland area. She also serves on the Oregon Health Policy Board, bringing a business perspective to efforts to provide access to quality, affordable health care for all Oregonians and to improve population health.

(BRADY 1)

THE RISING COSTS OF HEALTH CARE COMPROMISE OTHER THINGS THAT BUSINESSES CAN DO. SO INCREASED WAGES, PRICES THAT YOU END UP HAVING TO PASS THROUGH TO CUSTOMERS -- IT'S A DIRECT IMPACT ON THE CUSTOMER SERVICE AND THE WORKPLACE COMMUNITY. IT PUTS EVERYBODY IN A VERY DIFFICULT SITUATION. THIS IS A CYCLE THAT CAN'T GO ON -- WE HAVE TO BREAK THE CYCLE SOMEHOW.

(more)

Brady is working with a team looking at how to deal with the Oregon Health Plan's \$679 million state budget shortfall. Focusing on prevention and early treatment will lower costs and improve the quality of care, Brady says.

(BRADY 2)

WE'RE IN A REALLY DIFFICULT SITUATION OF HAVING TO CUT ABOUT 39 PERCENT OF THE MEDICAID BUDGET. AND WE CAN DO THAT BY CUTTING SERVICES BUT WHAT WE ACTUALLY BELIEVE IS IF YOU SHIFT THE WAY HEALTH CARE IS PROVIDED, WE CAN BRING THE COST DOWN AND END UP WITH A BETTER SYSTEM.

Brady also says a proposed Oregon Health Insurance Exchange will help businesses and their employees choose the health insurance program that works best for them.

(more)

(BRADY 3)

PART OF WHAT THE HEALTH POLICY BOARD AND ALL OF THE COMMUNITY MEMBERS THAT HAVE HELPED US BUILD THE PROGRAM REALLY WANT TO SEE IS, NUMBER ONE, AN EXCHANGE WHERE YOU CAN GO TO A WEBSITE AND SHOP FOR INSURANCE AND HAVE IT BE VERY VERY EASY. IN ADDITION, WE'RE GOING TO BE ABLE TO GIVE SMALL BUSINESSES -- ANYBODY WHO'S EMPLOYED WITH A SMALL BUSINESS, LIKE A RESTAURANT FOR INSTANCE, CAN GO TO THE WEBSITE AND INSTEAD OF JUST HAVING A CHOICE OF ONE HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM, THEY'RE GOING TO HAVE A CHOICE -- MULTIPLE CHOICES!

Brady says Oregon businesses are depending on these changes to bring stability to health care costs, so employers can focus on business priorities.

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Editors: Audio files of Eileen Brady's quotes are available by replying to this e-mail or online at:

[Brady 1 - www.oregon.gov/OHA/news/media/2011-0315-brady-pt1.mp3](http://www.oregon.gov/OHA/news/media/2011-0315-brady-pt1.mp3)

[Brady 2 - www.oregon.gov/OHA/news/media/2011-0315-brady-pt2.mp3](http://www.oregon.gov/OHA/news/media/2011-0315-brady-pt2.mp3)

[Brady 3 - www.oregon.gov/OHA/news/media/2011-0315-brady-pt3.mp3](http://www.oregon.gov/OHA/news/media/2011-0315-brady-pt3.mp3)