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Contact:

Felisa Hagins

Political Director, SEIU Local 49

Cell: 503-789-2054

Email: felisah@seiu49.org

Certified Titles Issued for Ballot Measures to Stop Hospital Overpricing, Rein in Excessive Compensation for Nonprofit Hospital Executives

Ballot titles for 3 additional measures are expected in the next week as Act Now for a Healthy Oregon builds momentum to bring healthcare costs back under control

(Salem, Ore.) – The Oregon Attorney General’s office this week issued certified ballot titles for two of the five ballot measures included in [Act Now for a Healthy Oregon’s](#) campaign to end hospital overpricing and bring healthcare costs back under control for Oregonians.

“Oregonians overwhelmingly agree that healthcare costs are out of control,” said Felisa Hagins, Political Director of SEIU Local 49. “Even though all but two Oregon hospitals are not-for-profit charities, Oregon hospitals currently charge patients \$10 billion more than the cost of care, and healthcare costs push thousands of Oregonians into bankruptcy every year. It’s time to ensure that our hospitals are living up to their responsibility to provide all Oregonians with quality care they can afford.”

Initiative 39 limits executive compensation at nonprofit hospitals to 15 times the annual wage of the lowest paid employee.

Initiative 40 requires hospitals to set uniform and reasonable rates for services, and caps the amount hospitals charge patients and insurance companies to no more than 30 percent above the actual cost of care. It also stipulates that customers can receive a refund of charges in excess of the rate cap.

The three remaining ballot measures for which certified ballot titles are expected within the next week include:

- **Quality Transparency** – Requires hospitals to make quality of care information accessible to the public;
- **Pricing Transparency** – Requires hospitals to post information that enables patients to compare hospital prices;
- **Caps On Executive Compensation** - Caps compensation for non-profit, hospital executives, relative to their lowest-paid employees.

Currently, hospitals in the same community often charge significantly different prices for similar procedures. Hospitals also commonly charge different prices depending on the method of payment. For instance, a patient insured by a commercial insurance provider may be charged a different price for the same procedure than an Oregon Health Plan recipient.

“Consumers are able to comparison shop for everything from groceries to phones to cars,” said Rob Sisk, President of SEIU Local 503 and chief petitioner for the pricing transparency measure. “Oregonians should be able to compare hospitals based upon the prices they charge, and they should know that they aren’t being overcharged.”

SEIU is poised to launch a statewide signature campaign to gather the 87,000 signatures required for each of the 5 ballot measures to qualify for the November 2014 General Election ballot.

“Our signature gathering team is ready to pound the pavement and we’ve hired a campaign manager and communications team with a track record of victory,” said Hagins. “We’re telling our story online, in the press and in communities around the state. There is already a groundswell of support from Oregonians who are tired of being underserved and overcharged. SEIU has a clear history of success at the ballot, and we look forward to a successful campaign leading to victory on behalf of working Oregonians.”

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Act Now for a Healthy Oregon is a project of the Service Employees International Union, the largest healthcare union in the country with 1.1 million health care workers. In Oregon and SW Washington, SEIU represents 15,000 health care providers in across the continuum of care and is the second largest purchaser of healthcare in the state.