



MEDIA ADVISORY

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Hospital Workers, Faith Leaders and Patients Call on Hospitals to Provide Financial Assistance to Oregonians in Need

Proposed ballot measure sets minimum requirements on charity care that must be met by nonprofit hospitals to maintain tax-exempt status

What: Act Now for a Healthy Oregon—a campaign of the Service Employees International Union—will gather signatures in support of a ballot measure that would require each nonprofit hospital in Oregon to spend the equivalent of 5% of payments for hospital services on providing charity healthcare and community health-related services. Charity care is healthcare provided for free or at a reduced cost to low-income patients who are otherwise unable to afford services.

When: **Thursday, December 12, 2013, 2:30pm-3:30pm**

Where: Outside Good Samaritan Hospital, NW Marshall & NW 22nd

Who: Hospital workers, faith leaders and patients will be on site to educate Oregonians about the need to establish minimum requirements on charitable care and gather signatures in support of the measure.

Why: With the holidays approaching, bills and shopping costs continue to mount. For Oregonians struggling to pay medical bills—like Scarlett Allen, chief petitioner of the Initiative—the holiday shopping season is a huge cause for concern. Bankruptcies resulting from unpaid medical bills will affect nearly 2 million people this year—making healthcare the number one cause of such filings, and outpacing bankruptcies due to credit-card bills or unpaid mortgages. Even with the charity care hospitals do offer, eligible people slip through the cracks. Each year Oregon, hospitals report millions of dollars in debt that hospitals think was incurred by people that were eligible for charity care. It is time for Oregon to require its hospitals to provide a minimum level of benefits to those who need it most.

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Interview Opportunities:

Scarlett Allen and Reverend Robert Krueger will be available for interviews.

Scarlett Allen is one of many Oregonians who cannot afford their healthcare bills. Scarlett has worked in Food Service at Legacy Emanuel for more than 18-years. After suffering a heart attack, Scarlett's medical bills became more than she could afford and her employer forced her into collections and debt. A video of Scarlett's story is available online at <http://youtu.be/cEGHWp3fvhs>

As a leader in the faith community, **Reverend Robert Krueger** feels charity care is a social imperative and a moral obligation. He sees this ballot measure as a way to help our community hospitals live up to their own missions.

About Act Now for a Healthy Oregon:

Act Now for a Healthy Oregon is a campaign of the Service Employees International Union, the largest healthcare union in the country. Act Now for a Healthy Oregon is currently gathering signatures for five healthcare ballot measures for the November 2014 ballot. The measures are a comprehensive package designed to improve hospital patient care while reducing healthcare costs. For more information, visit: acthealthyoregon.org

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