

Oregonians vote on Medicaid taxes as costs soar

Ballots are due tonight at 8

By GILLIAN FLACCUS
Associated Press

PORTLAND — Oregon aggressively expanded its Medicaid rolls under the Affordable Care Act, adding enough people to leave only 5 percent of its population uninsured — one of America's lowest rates.

Now, with the reduction of a federal match that covered those enrollees, the state is calling on voters to decide how to pay for its ballooning Medicaid costs.

A special election today asks Oregonians whether they approve of a tax on hospitals, health insurers and managed care companies that would leave Medicaid, as it is now, untouched. More than 1 in 4 residents here rely on it.

Maine voters were in the national spotlight when they recently approved Medicaid expansion. But experts say Oregon's election is the only instance of voters — not lawmakers — getting the final say on the complicated question of how to fund rising Medicaid costs.

The outcome could have significant consequences for the state's health care spending.

"If it's not supported, you



Kelly Burke walks down the steps of her home in Portland past several lawn signs, one at far left supporting Oregon's Measure 101. Burke has volunteered for phone banks to garner support for the measure.

AP Photo/Gillian Flaccus

have a huge hole, and where do you go from there?" said Stacey Mazer, senior staff associate with the National Association of State Budget Officers. "I followed these issues starting in the fall, and this was the biggie."

Measure 101 would impose a 0.7 percent tax on some hospitals and a 1.5 percent tax on the gross health insurance premiums collected by insurers and on managed

care organizations, raising anywhere from \$210 million to \$320 million over the next two years.

Proponents call the tax an "assessment" and say money raised could cover the more than 350,000 low-income Oregonians who were added to the plan since 2014 while state lawmakers work out a long-term solution.

The loss of that revenue could jeopardize an additional

\$630 million to \$960 million in federal Medicaid matching funds that flow to the poorest in the state, according to the nonpartisan voter pamphlet. That possibility prompted the very hospitals and health insurers who would be taxed to come out as the measure's biggest backers. They say the cost of the taxes would be less than that of uninsured emergency-room visits.

The ballot measure arose

from a grassroots campaign to put parts of a bipartisan legislative funding solution passed last year before voters. Republican state Rep. Julie Parrish and several colleagues were angered by portions of the bill that exempt large, self-insured corporations like Nike from Medicaid taxes but not Oregonians who buy insurance on health care exchanges.

They also believe hospitals and insurers will pass the cost to consumers, despite language that limits premium rate increases to 1.5 percent.

Parrish, who represents a Portland suburb, spearheaded the drive to collect more than 84,000 signatures to get the measure on the ballot. Her cellphone number appears in the official voter's guide with a note urging voters to call her with questions.

"This is not a 'We hate Medicaid' referendum," Parrish said. "This is about the fact that our colleagues put forward some pieces of the funding package that we believed to be unfair, unequitable and unsustainable."

Those in favor of the measure say Parrish's opposition to the taxes is what's unsustainable. More than 175 organizations have backed the pro-Measure 101 campaign, including former Gov. John Kitzhaber, an emergency room doctor.

People who support Measure 101 have raised \$2.8 million. Parrish and her allies have raised \$353,000.

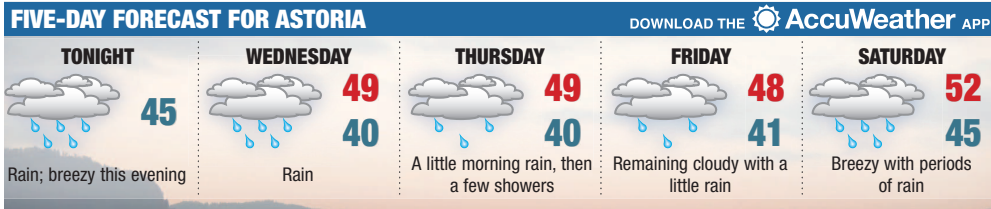
Portland resident Kelly Burke has volunteered at a pro-Measure 101 phone bank. She briefly lost her insurance years ago when she was pregnant with her second child. She now has a serious auto-immune disease and is thankful she has insurance through her partner's employer.

"What people don't understand is that people are working, but they still can't afford health care," she said.

Medicaid is a federal-state collaboration originally meant for poor families and severely disabled people. Over the years, it's grown to become the largest government health insurance program, now covering 1 in 5 Americans.

In 2014, Oregon was one of 32 states and the District of Columbia to allow people making 138 percent of the federal poverty line to qualify for Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act. That's \$34,600 for a family of four. Before, they had to make less to qualify.

The changes brought Oregon's slew of new enrollees. For the first two years, the federal government covered the full cost for them — and for those in other states.



ALMANAC
Astoria through Monday.

Temperatures

High/low	51°/40°
Normal high/low	50°/38°
Record high	62° in 1981
Record low	16° in 1943

Precipitation

Monday	0.27"
Month to date	6.83"
Normal month to date	7.52"
Year to date	6.83"
Normal year to date	7.52"

SUN AND MOON

Sunset tonight 5:07 p.m.
Sunrise Wednesday 7:47 a.m.
Moonrise today 11:10 a.m.
Moonset today none

Phase	Jan 24	Jan 31	Feb 7	Feb 15
First	☾	☾	☾	☾
Full	☾	☾	☾	☾
Last	☾	☾	☾	☾
New	☾	☾	☾	☾

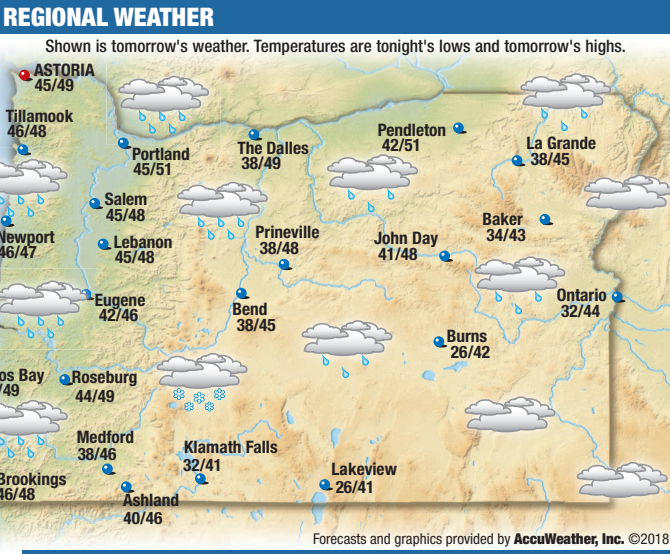
UNDER THE SKY
Tonight's Sky: An hour before sunrise, the stars that appear during early evening in summer also appear just before dawn in winter.

TOMORROW'S TIDES
Astoria / Port Docks

Time	High	Time	Low
6:00 a.m.	8.6 ft.	12:42 p.m.	2.2 ft.
6:38 p.m.	6.7 ft.	none	

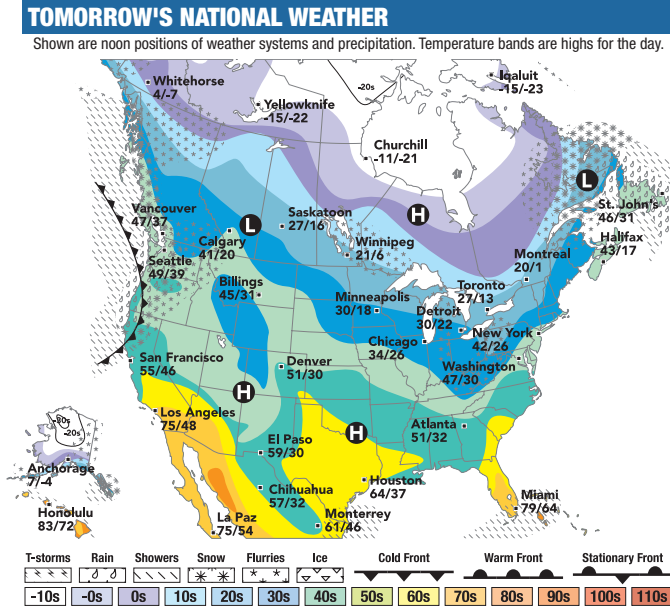
NATIONAL CITIES

City	Today	Wed.
Atlanta	56 34 s	51 32 s
Boston	55 38 r	39 20 pc
Chicago	36 22 sf	34 26 pc
Denver	38 19 s	51 30 s
Des Moines	35 26 pc	40 29 s
Detroit	40 23 sn	30 22 c
El Paso	57 28 s	59 30 pc
Fairbanks	-12 -29 sf	-25 -30 c
Honolulu	82 73 pc	83 72 pc
Indianapolis	39 23 sf	33 23 pc
Kansas City	40 25 pc	49 33 s
Las Vegas	60 39 s	61 39 pc
Los Angeles	74 50 s	75 48 pc
Memphis	47 28 s	51 33 s
Miami	83 70 c	79 64 sh
Nashville	46 27 c	46 26 s
New Orleans	62 41 pc	58 39 c
New York	56 37 r	42 26 pc
Oklahoma City	54 25 s	59 34 s
Philadelphia	62 36 r	42 27 pc
St. Louis	40 25 sf	45 30 s
Salt Lake City	41 24 pc	46 32 pc
San Francisco	55 44 c	55 46 r
Seattle	47 44 r	49 39 r
Washington, DC	66 38 r	47 30 s



REGIONAL CITIES

City	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W
Baker City	40	34	sf	43	29	c
Bend	47	38	r	45	27	r
Brookings	53	46	r	48	40	r
Eugene	50	42	r	46	35	r
Ilwaco	52	47	r	49	43	r
Klamath Falls	46	32	c	41	22	r
Medford	50	38	r	46	31	r
Newberg	49	46	r	49	39	r
Newport	50	46	r	47	41	r
North Bend	55	46	r	48	40	r
Olympia	47	44	r	48	37	r
Pendleton	46	42	c	51	33	r
Portland	49	45	r	51	39	r
Roseburg	54	44	r	49	37	r
Salem	50	45	r	48	38	r
Seaside	52	46	r	49	42	r
Spokane	37	35	sn	41	29	r
Springfield	50	44	r	47	36	r
Vancouver	48	45	r	50	39	r
Yakima	43	36	sn	50	30	sn



School budget committee needs members

The Daily Astorian

The Astoria School Board needs three candidates to serve on the school district's budget committee.

The positions include a new three-year term expiring June 2020, an unexpired term ending in June and another

unexpired term ending in June 2019.

Applications must have been a resident of the district for at least one year and be a registered voter. Submit applications to the district office on the third floor of the Capt. Robert Gray School building at 785 Alameda Ave.

Applications are available on the school district's website, astoria.k12.or.us, and due by 3 p.m., Feb. 2. The school board will appoint applicants at their regular meeting next month. Contact Superintendent Craig Hoppes at choppes@astoria.k12.or.us for more information.

High wind warning today on North Coast

The Daily Astorian

A high wind warning has been issued for the North Coast this afternoon and evening. Winds to the south will range from 30 mph to 40 mph with gusts of 60 mph from 1 p.m.

to 7 p.m., according to the National Weather Service. It will mostly affect beaches and headlands.

Winds may blow down trees, branches and power lines. Small power outages are possible, and driving may be difficult.

DEATH

Jan. 20, 2018

HILLARD, Joseph A., 52, of Astoria, died in Portland. Crown Memorial Center in Portland is in charge of the arrangements.

MEMORIAL

Saturday, Jan. 27

GRAYBEAL, Daniel Mark — Memorial and potluck reception at 1 p.m. at Imago Dei, 1302 S.E. Ankeny St. in Portland. All are welcome. Graybeal, 39, of Albany, formerly of Cannon Beach and Seaside, died Jan. 5, 2018, in Albany. Fisher Funeral Home in Albany is in charge of the arrangements.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

TUESDAY
Seaside Airport Advisory Committee, 6 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.
Clatsop County Human Services Advisory Council, 4 to 5:30 p.m., 800 Exchange St., Room 430.
Astoria Library Board, 5:30 p.m., Library Flag Room, 450 10th St.
Warrenton City Commission, 6 p.m., City Hall, 225 S. Main Ave.

WEDNESDAY
Astoria Parks Board, 6:45 a.m., City Hall, 1095 Duane St.
Clatsop County Housing Authority Board, 5 p.m., Judge Guy Boyington Building, 857 Commercial St.
Clatsop County Board of Commissioners, 6 p.m., Judge Guy Boyington Building, 857 Commercial St.
Astoria Planning Commission, 6:30 p.m., City Hall, 1095 Duane St.

ON THE RECORD

DUII

- At 8:48 p.m. Monday, Jason Riggs, 44, of Seaside, was arrested by the Seaside Police Department on the 710 block of 24th Avenue and charged with driving under the influence of intoxicants. His blood alcohol content was 0.12 percent.
- At 8:15 p.m. Saturday, Micah Kekoa Domingcil, 23, of Astoria, was arrested by the

Clatsop County Sheriff's Office on state Highway 202 and charged with DUII and recklessly endangering another person.

- At 1:18 a.m. Saturday, Thomas James Kelley, 24, of Warrenton, was arrested by the Clatsop County Sheriff's Office on Commercial Street and Ninth Street and charged with DUII and recklessly endangering another person.

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