



November 3, 2025

TO: Co-Chair Priest, Co-Chair Strickland, Members of the
Management-Labor Advisory Committee

FROM: Subcommittee Co-Chair Schlessinger and Co-Chair Cronan

RE: Subcommittee Recommendations, access to care

The access to care subcommittee was tasked with reviewing HB 3374 from the 2025 legislative session. The subcommittee also reviewed access to care issues within the workers' compensation system.

The subcommittee met from May to Oct. 2025. Information can be found on the [subcommittee website](#)

The subcommittee divided the information they heard from providers and stakeholders into six topic areas for consideration:
Statutory – Rulemaking – Outreach – Training and Education – Timely Responses – Other

From the topic areas came the issues that were most pressing in the workers' compensation system. Four proposals were introduced by stakeholders and considered by the subcommittee:

Dr. Saboe – [proposal](#)
SAIF – [proposal](#)
Lon Holston – [proposal](#)
OTLA - [proposal](#)

Members

Lorne Bulling
IronWorkers Local 29

Emily Cronan
Oregon Nurses Association

Sara Duckwall
Duckwall Fruit

Ryan Hearn
Anduril Industries

Stacy Lewallen
Fortis Construction, Inc.

Sarah Merrick
City of Salem, Fire
Department

Patrick Priest
CIS Trust
Management co-chair

Kim Schlessinger
Samaritan Health Services

Scott Strickland
Sheet Metal Workers Local
#16 Labor co-chair

Margaret Weddell
Labor representative

Sean O'Day
Director, Oregon
Department of Consumer &
Business Services,
Ex-Officio

Committee administration

Teri Watson
Committee Administrator

Baaba Ampah
Committee Assistant

Recommendations:

The subcommittee recommends Dr. Saboe's proposal, that is currently linked to the SAIF HB 3374 (2025), be withdrawn and re-drafted without the HB 3374.

The subcommittee does not have a recommendation for the SAIF HB 3374 proposal, with SAIF removing their proposal and not asking to bring it forward again.

The subcommittee recommends additional time to study and research Lon Holston's proposal.

The subcommittee recommends the OTLA proposal move forward as:

- Workers' Compensation Division (WCD) move forward with rulemaking immediately to consider a standard procedure for submitting requests for preauthorization with a deadline for response, after which the worker could treat the lack of response as a denial and file an appeal with WCD.
- WCD move forward with rulemaking in 2026 to discuss with stakeholders a more formal process for adjudicating medical disputes at the Medical Review Unit with procedures that mirror the Workers' Compensation Board.
- WCD move forward with rulemaking in 2026 to discuss increased compensation rates for providers that treat injured workers.
- Support a legislative concept that expands nurse practitioners and physician associates to full Type A providers. The legislative concept must go through the formal MLAC legislative review process.

Stakeholders would like to see the access to care subcommittee continue as a task force to address access to care. The co-chairs would like to recommend a summit meeting in the Spring of 2026 where we bring a comprehensive and geographically diverse group of stakeholders together that currently provide healthcare services in Oregon. This summit meeting will look at how we serve our communities as patients, what barriers are faced by injured workers in the healthcare space, and identify the areas of:

- Duplication
- Delays in care
- Lack of providers
- Administrative burden on both providers and patients
- Regulatory incongruences or redundant obligations
- Lack of community and provider education operating within the workers' compensation system

After the summit, the co-chairs envision an ongoing task force for the general healthcare industry and the treatment of injured workers.

The subcommittee co-chairs want to again thank all of the stakeholders who participated in the process.

You can review all of the materials used for the decision-making process at the MLAC access to care subcommittee website: <https://www.oregon.gov/DCBS/mlac/Pages/access-to-care-subcommittee.aspx>