Nelson proposes healthcare reform for disabled veterans

by Bend Weekly News Sources

(Salem, Oregon) â€“ Oregon State Representative Donna Nelson (R-McMinnville) proposes bold changes to the way Oregonâ€™s disabled veterans receive health care.

â€œWe are now working with the Oregon War Veterans Association to draft a bill that would allow all disabled veterans access to the Oregon Health Plan (OHP),â€• Representative Nelson stated. â€œMany of our disabled veterans live in rural communities far removed from regional Veterans Administration (VA) medical centers. But because these brave men and women are eligible for VA benefits, they are denied use of the OHP.â€•

Oregon State Representative Donna Nelson (R-McMinnville) proposes bold changes to the way Oregonâ€™s disabled veterans receive health care.
There are an estimated 40,000 disabled veterans living in Oregon. For many medical procedures, veterans must travel to either the Portland or Roseburg VA medical center in order to receive VA-funded treatment.

Representative Nelson explained, â€œthis proposal would allow those who have sacrificed so much to receive treatment locally, rather than at clinics half-way across the state.â€•

Greg Warnock, the President of the Oregon War Veterans Association, believes this plan is long overdue. â€œVeterans living in rural communities have suffered long enough,â€• said Warnock. â€œIf disabled veterans had access to the OHP, their medical needs could easily be met from within their own communities.â€•

Other veterans groups support the idea. â€œAllowing disabled veterans to join the OHP would provide a valuable resource for disabled veterans in rural areas,â€• said Kevin Oâ€™Reilly, the government relations director for Oregon Paralyzed Veterans of America. â€œMany of these veterans have difficulty in accessing health care through the VA due to extended travel times. Plus, those with limited incomes can face a huge financial burden meeting travel costs.â€•

Other states such as Illinois provide health insurance programs for certain veterans who have no other form of coverage. Oregon would be the first state to provide a comprehensive medical plan for all disabled veterans.

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