

# United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6200

April 3, 2025

The Honorable Mehmet Oz  
Administrator  
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services  
7500 Security Boulevard  
Baltimore, MD 21244

Dear Administrator Oz:

Now that the Senate has confirmed you to serve as Administrator of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, I write to follow up on a conversation we had during your nomination hearing on March 14, 2025, before the U.S. Senate Committee on Finance. As you will recall, I invited you to join me in Malheur County in eastern Oregon to meet with Oregonians who are enrolled in Medicaid, known in my home state as the Oregon Health Plan.

In response, you stated, “I promise you I will be with you in Malheur County or everywhere you wish to travel within Oregon.” I now have some dates in April and June during upcoming state work periods when I could schedule one of my open-to-all town halls that you could attend with me in this rural county along the Idaho border. By way of background, I have held 1,110 such town halls throughout Oregon in keeping with my commitment to hold at least one such community gathering every year in each of my state’s 36 counties. Everybody is welcome to attend and questions are drawn by lottery.

I know you will honor your commitment to Oregonians to visit Malheur County so you can hear directly from citizens and dedicated health care workers how devastating proposed Medicaid cuts by the Trump Administration and Congressional Republicans would be to one of Oregon’s poorest counties. The importance of Medicaid in Malheur County cannot be overstated. With more than half of its residents enrolled in the Oregon Health Plan, it has the highest share among Oregon’s 36 counties. Among those enrolled, the vast majority (almost 80%) are children, nearly 25% have a disability, nearly 50% are Hispanic or Latino, and more than 25% speak Spanish as their primary language.

The Oregon Health Plan is a lifeline for seniors, children, people with disabilities, and farm workers in Malheur County. It is what allows families to place their aging loved one in a local nursing home. The Oregon Health Plan helps kids have access to counseling at school, support they would not receive otherwise. It allows kids and adults with disabilities to go to school, go to work, and thrive at home, in their communities, because they have access to home-based care. And it is what guarantees life-saving treatment for the sickest Oregonians, in their darkest hours.

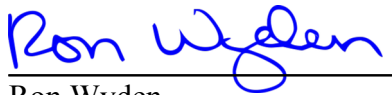
Not only that, the Oregon Health Plan is the economic lifeblood of Malheur County. Malheur County boasts one hospital, one nursing home, and a community-based mobile crisis team, operating 24 hours per day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year for people who experience a

behavioral health crisis. These pillars of the community offer stable employment for doctors, nurses, aides, counselors, janitors, and administrators, among others.

Oregon is one of the 40 U.S. states that expanded its Medicaid program to ensure health security for more than 640,000 Oregonians, ensuring a stable, sustained source of funding for cash-strapped hospitals, nursing homes, and other essential health care providers. As you know, rural hospital closures are heavily concentrated in Southern states that have not adopted Medicaid expansion. The residents of Malheur County know the harsh and painful realities of closures and service reductions all too well from the loss of maternity services at the hospital in neighboring Baker County. I have heard from many of my constituents in Eastern Oregon who face long drives on roads that can often be closed due to weather to receive basic health care.

I am grateful you will have the opportunity to hear firsthand about what the Oregon Health Plan means to Malheur County, particularly as the Trump Administration and Congressional Republicans entertain the largest cuts to the Medicaid program in its history. During the upcoming state work period, I could schedule a town hall on April 23 in Malheur County. And during the June work period, I could schedule a town hall between June 19 - 21. Please let me know which of these dates works for you.

Sincerely,



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Ron Wyden  
United States Senator  
Ranking Member, Committee  
on Finance