

## [Why independent medical practices oppose Oregon's Measure](#)

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Add independent medical practices to the list of opponents to Ballot Measure 118, which would impose a 3% gross receipts tax for corporations with Oregon sales of more than \$25 million a year.

These clinics, which already operate on thin margins, are bound by contracts with insurers. So they can't simply pass along higher costs to patients, nor would they want to, said Dr. John Schuler, a radiation oncologist at Compass Oncology in Tigard.

"Health care is an essential life-saving service we're providing, and a gross receipts tax doesn't make sense in our industry," Schuler said. "While other businesses might be able to raise prices, we can't do that. It would have a dramatic impact to our bottom line, and our real concern is that it will restrict access to care to patients."

The measure would generate about \$15 billion per biennium, resulting in a yearly distribution of \$1,600 for all Oregon residents, regardless of age or income, according to a state analysis.

A spectrum of businesses oppose the measure, including grocery stores, banks and manufacturers. The Portland Metro Chamber and Oregon Business & Industry are among the opponents, but [so is the left-leaning Oregon Center for Public Policy](#), arguing the measure would trigger "unintended, damaging consequences," including cuts to funding for schools and other essential services, while sending rebates to "people who don't need them."

Supporters of the measure liken the rebate to a form of universal basic income that will help alleviate poverty.

Dr. Richard Jamison, president of The Oregon Clinic, said proponents are promising something that's "too good to be true." The tax would be piled onto several others initiated in recent years chipping away at bottom lines.

"We've already started to see challenges with recruiting into the area because word is out that it's an expensive place to live," Jamison said. "It's one more threat."

Schuler, at Compass Oncology, said most of his clinic's patients are on government insurance programs, which don't fully cover the cost of care. Meanwhile, the cost of drugs borne by the clinic keeps escalating, he said.

Schuler said he worries that if the measure passes, Compass will have to cap the number of patients it treats who are on Medicare and Medicaid.

"We are the low-cost provider of oncology services in the Portland metro," Schuler said. "If we go away, patients will have to drive farther and pay more for care and the cost to the system goes up as well."

Nonprofit hospitals are excluded from the proposed tax.