



Legacy Health
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Senator Laurie Monnes Anderson, Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Health Care

Re: Legacy Health Supports SB 785

Legacy Health is a locally owned, nonprofit health care provider serving the Portland/Vancouver area and mid-Willamette Valley. Legacy is an integrated network of care providers with seven community-based and nationally recognized hospitals and over 100 primary care, urgent care and specialty care clinics.

The science is clear. Agricultural overuse of antibiotics fosters the emergence of resistant bacteria. Antibiotics are meant to be given in precise, time limited doses to treat specific types of infections. The practice of routinely giving antibiotics to livestock and poultry when they are not sick increases the likelihood that antibiotic resistant bacteria will flourish, and these life-saving medicines will not work in humans when needed. Just think what would happen if we routinely put antibiotics in human food; it's the same thing.

Antimicrobial resistance is already affecting our patients, making treatment of some routine infections more difficult, but it is our immunosuppressed patients that are the most susceptible. They need the most potent antibiotics available to battle infections when their own immune systems are weakened. This includes people with cancer, organ transplants, AIDS, Clostridium Difficile, and even neonates.

The emergence of a multiply resistant bacteria is one of the few scenarios that can potentially close an Intensive Care Unit (ICU) or even a hospital. This is because of the aggressive steps that must be taken to wipe out resistant strains that could infect a hospital or ICU.

Legacy, along with many health care providers, has worked to eliminate the overuse of antibiotics in humans in hospitals, clinics, and other care settings. Unfortunately, since 70% of all antibiotics used in the world are given to livestock, we cannot do it alone. Without action that curbs the overuse of antibiotics in agriculture, we run the risk of losing antibiotics as a critical tool to treat our patients and save lives. This may not only affect us when we need them, but our children and our grandchildren.

Legacy Health urges you to support SB 785.

Sincerely,

Lewis L. Low, MD, FCCM, FACP
Senior Vice President and Chief Medical Officer