



January 28, 2019

Oregon State Legislature
Senate Committee on Health Care

Re: *Support of Senate Bill 140:*
Emergency Department Boarding Prevention Pilot Funding and Task Force

Chair Monnes Anderson and Members of the Senate Committee on Health Care:

My name is Scott Kelly, and I am President and CEO of **Asante**, a large regional healthcare provider in southern Oregon. Asante serves the communities of Medford, Ashland, Grants Pass, Talent, Phoenix, White City, and the surrounding area with a network of over 80 facilities. Our hospitals include *Rogue Regional Medical Center* in Medford (a level 2 trauma center), *Asante Ashland Community Hospital*, and *Asante Three Rivers Medical Center* in Grants Pass.

Asante supports SB 140 which would allow hospitals and communities the opportunity to work together on innovative solutions for patients who board in an emergency department because there is no place for them to be safely released. It is important to recognize that the root cause of this problem relates not to the emergency department, but rather to hospital and community capacity to provide safe and appropriate care for the population. During a recent boarding crisis, we had 30 patients appropriate for immediate discharge to skilled nursing facilities, with only 1 available bed in the region. We had a number of patients that we could not find adequate community placement, so they are inappropriately housed in our acute care hospital without acute care hospital needs pending safe discharge arrangements. During that time, we were boarding 25-30 patients daily. Not all of these patients are behavioral health, but many are and they have the same challenges.

Our hospitals have already begun to address the issue of emergency department boarding to help alleviate the stresses that it can place on our system, as well as those in need of emergency or other care. Our efforts include helping fund Columbia Care in Medford which serves as a step-down clinic, being a major funder and supporter of the Grants Pass Sobering Center and expanding our behavioral health beds by more 30% in Medford. Based on our recent experiences, we know there is more that needs to be done.

While we do not have the answer for all communities statewide, we know that SB140 will give hospitals and their communities the opportunity to be innovative and share best practices. Beyond innovation, Asante highly supports the convening of a task force to provide recommendations to the legislature. This would both help highlight areas of concern and be a safe place to produce recommendations for regional and statewide solutions.

We greatly appreciate your support of SB140.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott Kelly".

Scott Kelly
President and CEO