



February 5, 2019
House Health Committee
900 Court St. NE
Salem Oregon 97301

Re: HB 2624 Emergency Department Boarding Prevention

Not all patients who present in hospital emergency rooms with a mental illness can or should be admitted to an acute care hospital room. In addition, sometimes these patients should never come to emergency departments in the first place. Sometimes the patients wait for extended hours, days, or even weeks waiting for an appropriate placement.

HB 2624 seeks to address these issues with a two-pronged approach:

1. Funding for short term community pilot programs to address ED boarding through community partnerships.
2. Create a task force to look at the systemic drivers behind ED boarding, and create long-term solutions before the 2021 Legislative Session.

The boarding of mental health patients in the ED can be a particularly acute problem for rural hospitals that have fewer ED rooms, fewer staff to monitor boarded patients, and fewer community resources to ultimately transfer patients to. **The Oregon Rural Health Association understands the need for HB 2624, and supports the approach outlined in the bill.**

Respectfully,
Sam Barber
Lobbyist, Oregon Rural Health Association