

OREGON HOSPICE &  
PALLIATIVE CARE  
ASSOCIATION



*Improving quality of life  
at the end of life.*

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February 5<sup>th</sup>, 2019 Re: Testimony in support of Senate Bill 178

Senate Human Services Committee

Dear Chair Senator Gelser, Vice-Chair Heard and Members of the Committee,

My name is Barbara Hansen and I serve as the CEO of The Oregon Hospice and Palliative Care Association. The "OHPCA" is a statewide public benefit organization helping to ensure Oregonians have access to high quality hospice and palliative care as they near the end of life. I am here today to speak in support of Senate Bill 178.

I receive calls from hospice programs all over the state who face this dilemma: a local nursing facility or group home requests hospice services for a terminally-ill resident who does not have an advanced directive or an identified health care representative. The resident has become incapable of signing the hospice election form and has no family member available to sign the form. The facility requests hospice services for their resident,

Current ORS 127.635 language describes the order for decision making assignment when a person is incapable and has no valid advanced directive or legally appointed health care representative. The statute describes actions approved for the health care representative including the withholding of care or withdrawal of life-sustaining procedures but does not specifically include signing the election form to allow hospice care.

This situation deprives these patients from the benefits of hospice care and puts them at additional risk of emergency department and hospital visits for pain and symptom-control problems. Nursing facilities and group homes are requesting, on behalf of their residents, the additional care and support hospice provides at the end of life. SB 178 adds the words: "including an election for hospice treatment" to ORS 127.635 language, which would then clearly allow a surrogate decision maker to sign a document allowing the patient to receive hospice care.

I appreciate the committee's time and would be happy to answer any questions or to discuss this bill in more detail.

Sincerely,

  
Barbara Hansen, MA, RN, CEO