



**HB 2327 – 3 Amendment Testimony
Relating to Long Term Care Emergency Preparedness & Response
House Health Care Subcommittee on COVID-19
March 10, 2021**

Chair Dexter, Vice Chair Hayden and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on HB 2327 and relating to improving long term care (LTC) emergency preparedness and response. I am Ruth Gulyas, CEO of LeadingAge Oregon – the statewide association of not-for-profit and other mission-directed organizations consisting of nursing homes, residential care, assisted living, in-home care agencies, continuing care retirement facilities known as CCRCs and federally subsidized housing for low-income seniors.

LeadingAge Oregon supports HB 2327 that takes the lessons learned over the past year in caring for seniors and people with disabilities within Oregon’s long term care system and enhances our ability to ensure they are protected in future emergencies. While this bill builds upon lessons learned to improve our response in the future, I want to recognize and thank first, the heroic frontline caregivers and long term care providers who have been at the forefront of the pandemic doing the best every day to keep seniors safe amongst the everchanging landscape. Additionally, LeadingAge Oregon has worked closely with the Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) and the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) throughout the pandemic, and we thank them for their tireless work. We have all learned so much.

I want to touch upon a few aspects of the bill. We have learned that there are many key stakeholders that need to be involved in planning and responding to a declared emergency. HB 2327, through the establishment of the LTC Emergency Preparedness and Response Team will ensure that key stakeholders and experts have a mechanism to advise and make recommendation to ODHS on several key response areas including but not limited to:

- communication and coordination between LTC providers and OHA;
- how to address staffing shortages; and
- personal protection equipment (PPE) and vaccine distribution to staff and residents.

The beginning of the pandemic left LTC providers, staff and residents without an adequate supply to critically needed PPE. HB 2327 will ensure that LTC providers has adequate PPE reserves for future needs.

We have witnessed the toll that isolation has taken on long term care residents and their loved ones over the year. HB 2327 will ensure that providers include social isolation prevention plans in their emergency response plan and allows ODHS to provide financial assistance to enable providers to purchase equipment to meet this requirement.

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to testify with you today.