



Oregon's Voice for Long Term Care & Senior Housing

February 4, 2021

House Committee on Veterans and Emergency Management
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court St. NE.
Salem, OR 97301

Subject: Support for House Bill 2461

Dear Chair Evans, Vice-Chairs Lewis and Meek, and members of the committee,

My name is Libby Batlan, and I serve as Senior Vice President of Government Relations at the Oregon Health Care Association (OHCA). OHCA represents long term care providers across the state. Our members care for 43,000 Oregonians who reside in licensed long term care facilities and 9,000 who receive services in their homes through in-home care agencies. I am here today to express support for House Bill 2461

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted long term care providers, workers, and residents particularly hard. Older people living with underlying health conditions—such as those living in long term care congregate settings—are at the highest risk of experiencing complications, hospitalization, and death as a result of this virus in addition to the burden of social isolation. The sector has worked incredibly hard over the last year to implement new infection prevention protocols and meet changing state and federal guidance in an effort to reduce the transmission of COVID-19 and keep workers and residents safe. Particularly, asymptomatic spread was a challenge for providers who, especially early on, lacked the necessary testing and personal protective equipment (PPE) to stop an outbreak.

The costs of providing care have increased substantially because of the pandemic while revenues have declined. Sourcing PPE was also a challenge for our members. In fact, the Society for Healthcare Organization Procurement Professionals reports that the daily costs of masks, gloves, and gowns increased by 1,064% on average since the pandemic began. The per unit costs of gowns increased by 2,000%, and 3M N95 masks costs increased by an astonishing 6,136%.¹³ Overall, the total daily average cost for PPE for a facility went from \$35 pre-COVID to \$2,510.25 per day during the pandemic.

OHCA supports HB 2461 because a statewide supply and sourcing plan for PPE is important for helping long term care respond to existing and future public health emergencies. The bill's aim to improve readiness and response to emergencies in the short- and long-terms are valuable to creating a disaster and resilience stockpile and decreasing dependence on outside sources for PPE. HB 2461 complements OHCA's own bill, HB 2327, which requires both providers and the

state to have a PPE reserve and distribution plan. If HB 2461 becomes law, OHCA would ask that long term care providers have a seat at the table as it relates to an appropriate distribution plan for the stockpile given the vulnerability of the residents we care for and the projected increase in Oregon's aging population who will need long term care services and supports over the next two decades.

Thank you for your consideration of HB 2461.

Sincerely,

Libby Batlan
Senior Vice President of Government Relations
Oregon Health Care Association