

Dear Chair, Vice-Chairs, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Julie Ouellette. I own a small Adult Placement Agency, helping seniors and their families find housing and care when needed. I am strongly in favor of HB 2394.

We work with seniors daily and we have seen how COVID has contributed to isolation and depression in seniors. It is devastating during a vulnerable and difficult time in their lives. Seniors need socialization, visits from families, and general oversight.

Now that most communities like mine are well into vaccinating their residents, it is paramount for communities to have plans in place to prevent isolation. Visits from loved ones are the best way to prevent spiraling mental health. Those visits can be face to face, virtual or via phone, but they are critical to wellbeing. As a member of the Oregon Senior Referral Agency Association, we donated several tablets to Medicaid accepting communities to be used with the residents. Our hope is that staff will have the time to use the tablets to facilitate visits with the residents and their loved ones.

We have heard from families that their loved ones are failing due to isolation. I respect the separation needed during the pandemic to protect people from physical illness, but we are seeing people wilt away due to depression, increased dementia and reduced mobility.

Having a plan in place to help prevent isolation could truly be life saving.

Thank you,

Julie Ouellette, CPRS
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