



Oregon's Voice for Long Term Care & Senior Housing

May 17, 2021

House Committee on Human Services
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court St. NE.
Salem, OR 97301

Chair Williams, Vice-Chairs Leif and Ruiz, and members of the committee,

The Oregon Health Care Association (OHCA) represents long term care providers in every corner of the state. More than 64,000 Oregonians receive long term care services in either licensed care facilities or in their home every day.

OHCA appreciates the collective policy work that went into SB 266A in the Senate Committee on Human Services, Mental Health and Recovery. This bill elevates the issue of staffing in community-based care (assisted living facilities and residential care facilities, including memory care) in a way that will promote high quality care for residents in these settings.

SB 266A puts facility staffing front and center when the Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) evaluates facility compliance, ensuring it considers whether a facility has staff sufficient to meet the scheduled and unscheduled needs of their residents 24 hours a day. **We urge the Committee to adopt the -A12 amendment**, which makes non-substantive changes to ensure the measure impacts the intended provider groups. Namely, SB 266A is meant to apply only to community-based care providers who are subject to the applicable staffing standards, and it unintentionally looped in nursing facilities.

SB 266A also maintains the Community-Based Care Compliance Framework, which was adopted by ODHS after the passage of HB 3359 (2017). HB 3359 raised staff training requirements, established new quality measures, created an enhanced oversight program, and established a scope and severity measure for penalties for abuse and license violations. It remains incredibly important that the regulatory changes made in response to HB 3359 are implemented and given time to be effective.

As the sector continues to combat the pandemic, tackling the workforce shortage will be paramount for providers who are struggling to find and hire trained caregivers. Enhancing enforcement around staffing is important, but Oregon must also prioritize investments in workforce development and education, along with adequately funding Medicaid reimbursement rates, especially for those providers in low-income, rural communities. Through this work we can continue to improve Oregon's nationally recognized long term care system.

Sincerely,

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