Dear Senator Prusak and members of the Committee,

I am a hospital-based palliative care physician in Portland and a member of the state POLST Coalition. Members of my team and I assist patients in completing Advance Directives and POLSTs almost daily. We are vigilant to get completed Advance Directives scanned into our electronic health record at once so they are available to staff at any of our 7 hospitals in our system, and available to appropriate staff at other systems who share Care Everywhere. We use electronic POLSTs so they are immediately uploaded to the state POLST Registry. Our POLST Registry is a proud accomplishment of this State and is the model for registries in other states.

The experience in other states that have tried an Advance Directive registry are dismal. The costs are high for minimal benefit.

I oppose establishing such a registry in Oregon as it would be ineffective and costly. I vigorously oppose any attempt to shoehorn an Advance Directory into the POLST Registry. Such an attempt would damage a well-functioning registry and confuse its mission. Instead, I encourage continued efforts to educate the public in an effort to make it the norm that every adult completes an Advance Directive, and to encourage efforts to get those scanned into EHRs so they are readily available when a crisis causes someone to lose the capacity for their own medical decision-making.

Thank you for attention to this serious issue. I appreciate the opportunity to provide my input. This testimony is solely on my behalf.

Joseph Stenger MD
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