



February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Chair Prusak, Vice-Chairs Hayden and Salinas and Members of the House Committee on Health Care:

Palliative care focuses on improving a person's quality of life while managing the impacts of a serious illness. Palliative care offers a support system to persons with a serious illness and their family members, so they can continue to have a good quality of life. Unlike hospice care, those receiving palliative care can continue to undergo curative or life prolonging treatments.

Interdisciplinary **team-based** palliative care offers the benefit of clinicians with *different* backgrounds and perspectives working together, as a team, to help manage symptoms and to allow a person to stay at home, wherever "home" is. HB 2981 would require the palliative-care team to include a primary care provider, a registered nurse, a medical social worker, access to spiritual care services and 24-hour clinical telephone support. For eligible persons who wish to receive this care, the care would be provided as ongoing care coordination rather than episodic outpatient appointments.

I believe the coverage of interdisciplinary, team-based palliative care in a patient's place of residence is really a health equity issue. If we were to ask the question: "Who can obtain interdisciplinary, team-based palliative care that can be delivered wherever the person resides *now*?", the answer might be:

- "Affluent people who have good health insurance."
- "People with good jobs whose employers provide comprehensive health insurance."
- "People who reside in large metropolitan areas where payers and health-care systems have contracted to cover these services." or finally:
- "People on Medicare who have selected a Medicare Advantage program which covers team-based palliative care".

The answer to the above question would *not* be: "A person covered by the Oregon Health Plan who resides in any rural area in the state." HB 2981 would require the Oregon Health Authority to cover interdisciplinary palliative care in a patient's place of residence all over the state of Oregon. On behalf of citizens who reside all over the state, I request your support for the passage of HB 2981.

Respectfully

CEO – Oregon Hospice & Palliative Care Association