

Providence Health & Services
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February 3, 2022

The Honorable Janelle Bynum
Chair, House Judiciary Committee
Oregon State Capitol
Salem, OR 97301

RE: House Bill 4142 – Relating to assault of person working in hospital

Dear Representative Bynum and members of the committee:

Providence is a Mission driven organization committed to creating a healing environment, inside and outside our ministries. As the largest private employer and largest health system in Oregon, Providence caregivers are the cornerstone of our ministries, bringing compassion to every patient interaction. We fundamentally believe that the safety and well-being of our caregivers is of utmost importance.

Providence's caregivers are on the front-line of the COVID-19 response and experience the stress, exhaustion, trauma, and grief of the pandemic response. Prior to the pandemic, our caregivers experienced an increasing number of violent events against them, and the pandemic has only exacerbated the problem. Despite ongoing challenges, our caregivers remain firmly committed to offering high quality care. Providence has taken steps within our ministries and local communities to create safe environments for our caregivers and patients, but it is not enough.

House Bill 4142 will expand the crime of assault in the third degree to our hospital caregivers, giving them the same protections as emergency medical service providers, operators of public transport vehicles, and youth correction officers. It is time for Oregon to show our healthcare workers that we value them and the work they do, and we are committed to holding those accountable that choose to act in a violent manner against healthcare professionals. We are asking you to stand with front line caregivers and support House Bill 4142 and to recognize that intentional violence against caregivers is a crime, placing Oregon with most other states in enhancing criminal penalties for violence against hospital employees.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment. We hope the committee will join us in support of House Bill 4142.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jennifer Gentry, RN".

Jennifer Gentry, MSN, RN, NEA-BC
Providence Health & Services - Oregon