



SB 1556 Introduced Testimony
Relating to Home & Community Based Caregiver Certification & Registry
Senate Human Services, Mental Health & Recovery Committee
February 3, 2022

Chair Gelser Blouin, Vice Chair Robinson and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to comment on SB 1556 relating to establishment of a certification process and registry for home and community based service (HCBS) care caregivers. I am Ruth Gulyas, CEO of LeadingAge Oregon – the statewide association of not-for-profit and other mission-directed organizations consisting of residential care and assisted living facilities, nursing homes, in-home care agencies, continuing care retirement facilities known as CCRCs and federally subsidized housing for low-income seniors.

LeadingAge Oregon supports the certification portion of the bill. We have long worked on initiatives, grants and other efforts to support the direct care workforce including enhancement and standardization of training requirements, a process by which a worker can show their meeting training standards and development of a career ladder. We do not support the registry portion of the bill.

It has been noted that the bill does not place any additional training requirements on HCBS caregivers, that all information to be placed on the registry already exists and that the bill's requirements would be phased in taking effect for Home Care Commission and in-home care agency workers in 2023 and 2024 for assisted living, residential care and memory care facilities.

It does however place an additional reporting burden upon long term care providers already experiencing both financial pressure due to the pandemic and extreme pressure upon staff resources due to a workforce shortage of a magnitude not seen before. The bill makes employers responsible for initiating and paying for a worker's certification. Employers would be responsible for collect attestations for workers as part of the certification process to ensure they have received required training.

Many long term care providers have stopped admitting new residents, closed portions of their facility and some are being forced to close as a result. Caregivers have experienced great stress juggling their work with their own personal caregiving responsibilities. They are burnt out. More than one member has said "it's brutal" out there. Employers simply cannot take on another mandate especially when we believe it is duplicative of existing requirements.

Mennonite Village, a continuing care retirement community Albany has recently made the difficult decision to close their in-home care agency that they have operating for over 20 years due the challenges presented by the workforce shortage on top of the pandemic. Their in-home care agency had served clients in the greater community as well as on their campus. They also had to close their adult foster care program due to workforce challenges.

We believe the registry duplicates the already existing requirement for providers to report meeting compliance with staff training requirements established with passage of House Bill 3359 (now ORS 443.447) in 2017. HB 3359 required that a uniform quality metrics reporting system, to be overseen by the Quality Measurement Council, be developed to measure and compare the performance of residential care and assisted living facilities across the state. One of the quality metrics to be tracked includes compliance with staff training requirements. DHS is required to publish an annual report that analyzes the results and make the report available online to in part allow the public to evaluate and compare facilities. Due to the pandemic this reporting has temporarily been simplified.

Additionally, HB 3359 also required direct care workers to receive a certificate of completion for satisfactorily completing approved dementia training which is now a requirement of [OAR 411-054](#) the rules governing assisted living/residential care facilities.

For these reasons and the short time allowed to explore the concept and need of the registry further during the short 2022 legislative session, we urge the committee to remove the registry from the bill. And that the registry concept be explored during the interim.

Thank you for your time and thank you again for the opportunity to comment on SB 1556.