



Oregon
Community
Brokerages

March, 2023

To: Sen Patterson, Chair, Senate Committee on Health
From: Katie Rose, Executive Director, Oregon Community Brokerages

Re: SB 492, banning the use of QALY in state medical assistance program allocations

Chair Patterson and members of the committee,

Oregon Community Brokerages is comprised of the 14 Support Service Brokerages across Oregon. Collectively, we provide case management services to more than 7,500 adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities living in their own or family homes in every community throughout the state. We connect people to what matters to them and support them to make the important decisions and choices that make up a life.

We believe that all human life is equally valuable. People should have equal access to life-improving and sustaining medical opportunities and resources. The concept of Quality Adjusted Life Years (QALY) is wholly at odds with these values. QALY is a metric applied in some insurance and medical settings that aims to separate the people whose lives are whole from those the metric deems partial due to disability, illness, or other conditions.

People with intellectual and developmental disabilities have been systemically undervalued and under-recognized by our society. Supporting people with IDD to be a visible part of our communities helps us heal from this poisonous perspective. When you get to know the lives under discussion, you begin to understand how wrong the concept of a part-life is. QALY is used as a cost-saving measure. We would argue that it comes at too high a cost—our essential humanity.

SB 492 would ban QALY, focusing care decisions instead on medical necessity, “based on the unique situation or characteristics of a recipient of medical assistance.” QALY policy calls to mind other infamous assaults on civil rights that have sought, over the years, to write into law that not all human lives are weighed equally. We must reject this premise whenever we see it.

Now that we know better, we must do better. We urge you to support SB 492 and reject medical discrimination in Oregon.