



March 20, 2023

Oregon State Legislature
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Senate Bill 1044 -2

Chair Patterson, Vice-Chair Hayden:

The Oregon Association of Hospitals and Health Systems (OAHHS) is a mission-driven, nonprofit association representing Oregon's 62 hospitals. Together, hospitals are the sixth largest private employer statewide, employing more than 70,000 employees. Hospitals are more than just buildings; they are cornerstones within the communities they serve. Our hospitals are employers, funders of community projects, and community spaces—all while providing essential health services to generation after generation of Oregonians. We know that when our hospitals are strong, our communities win. OAHHS is committed to fostering a stronger, safer Oregon with equitable access to excellent health care.

We support SB 1044 -2. OAHHS supports expanding services throughout the state to better meet the needs of those with behavioral health needs. We expect that SB 1044 -2 will support improvements to our failing continuum of care and better serve our communities.

Oregon hospitals are caring for people with behavioral health needs each day. Due to lack of access to other care settings, health care workers and hospitals must provide services to people with behavioral health needs in the community hospital setting even when those patients no longer need hospital-level care. Lack of access to behavioral health services is occurring because Oregon's continuum of care is failing, leaving patients in hospitals who need homes, skilled nursing, access to community behavioral health services, or other safe places to go to receive appropriate care. The insufficient payment to hospitals for the care they are providing to these patients further strains hospitals and jeopardizes access to care for the community. Additionally, the Oregon State Hospital is not admitting and caring for many people who are civilly committed and there are substantial concerns that Oregon State Hospital is not ensuring patients being discharged have access to appropriate community-based resources.

Thank you for the opportunity to engage on behalf of our members and the communities they serve.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andi Easton".

Andi Easton
Vice President of Government Affairs
Oregon Association of Hospitals and Health Systems

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