

Submitter: Bridgette Butler  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care  
Measure: SB1076

Chair Patterson, Vice-Chair Hayden, and members of the committee,

My name is Bridgette Butler and I am writing in support of SB 1076

I work with Black Thistle Street Aid, a medical outreach group in Eugene that provides direct medical care and support to people experiencing homelessness in our community. Our team provides care directly to encampments around town every week along with a once-monthly pop-up clinic. All too often, we run across people with extreme health issues who were discharged from the hospitals with no plan in place, no understanding of their follow up care and no way to get the oftentimes crucial medications they were prescribed at time of discharge. Or we run into people who were treated horribly in the local hospitals due to their housing status and are hesitant to seek care even if they need it.

One of our patients who waited until he absolutely had to go in due to the stigmatized care he usually receives, was hospitalized for several weeks after almost losing his foot to an infection. At time of discharge, he was brought by cab from the hospital to the alley behind his counselor's building late December in the evening in the freezing rain with no survival supplies to support him. He spent the night in his wheelchair with a tarp over his head. While I would love to say this situation is rare, our team encounters "discharge plans" like this all too often; hospitals seemingly rushing unhoused individuals out their doors without any thought of their ongoing health concerns and basic survival needs.

There needs to be something in place for hospitals to ensure people's wellbeing outside of their institution. Providing some kind of robust discharging could in turn prevent people from returning again and again and thus relieve some of the burden on already short-staffed hospitals. SB1076 would ensure people are discharged to appropriate places, at appropriate times of day and with adequate plans in place to ensure the best health outcomes for a person. The bill would also challenge hospital staff to treat all patients as humans regardless of their housing status and put effort into finding ways to truly help a person while in their care: a warm meal, adequate clothing for the weather, connections to other community resources, access to medications and a clear understanding of what their discharge plans are.

Thank you for your time, work and interest on this. I hope you consider supporting SB 1076 to ensure the health of our community as a whole.

In community,  
Bridgette