

March 21, 2023

Chair Fahey and members of the committee,

My name is Jayesh Palshikar, I am a registered nurse and I live in Wood Village, Oregon. I would like to highlight why HB 3592 is so important:

Mt Hood Medical Center has been a key health facility, caring for the residents of eastern Multnomah county as well as rural parts of Clackamas County for more than six decades. Throughout that time, the birth center at Mt Hood Medical Center has provided high quality care not only for the immediate communities of like Wood Village but also communities in the gorge and on Mt Hood where families travel from as far away as Government Camp and Rhododendron for necessary care.

Also over the past decades, social and economic changes have pushed Portland Metro minority communities farther into east Multnomah county. Mt Hood Medical Center has become a critical access point for both rural families as well as for Metro area BIPOC and immigrant communities.

Legacy Health System is no stranger to causing harm to the area's BIPOC communities. Emanuel Hospital was instrumental in harming the historically black community of Albina, displacing hundreds of families to build the facility where it stands today and paving the way for the gentrification that has displaced so many persons of color, pushing them farther into east county or forcing them out of the state all together. To this day it continues to evoke a legacy of pain and racism.

The news that Legacy Health System was planning to close the birth center is nothing short of a disaster. And the plan to require that local families give birth at Emanuel hospital is not only impractical, but a tone deaf slap in the face.

I have worked in birth centers, and cared for newborn infants and postpartum mothers. I'll tell you, it is wonderful until it is terrifying. I have learned that a postpartum hemorrhage or a seizure can threaten a life with almost no warning. It is not exaggeration to say that the minutes it takes to drive from Mt Hood Medical Center to Emanuel can be the difference between life and death.

This closure is unacceptable. For Legacy Health System to harm the area's most vulnerable populations with the closure of a life saving service is unconscionable. Patients deserve better than that. My neighbors deserve better than that. They deserve access to life saving care in their community. For Legacy it is a question of accounting, for us, the residents of east county, the BIPOC communities and the rural families that depend on Mt Hood Medical Center this is about saving lives.

This is an emergency and requires immediate action. Communities should not have to suffer this way, and no family should have to worry about safely delivering a baby. HB 3592 allows the Oregon Health Authority to consider these types of impacts when considering a waiver, such as the one Legacy Health System has applied for. The State of Oregon needs to consider issues related to equity and the disparate impacts that such a waiver would have on patients and communities. I urge your support for the quick passage of House Bill 3592 to ensure ongoing access to life saving health care throughout the state.

Thank you,  
Jayesh Palshikar, RN BS

## References

[Communities of Color in Multnomah County: An Unsettling Profile](#). Published by Coalition of Communities of Color and Portland State University School of Social Work in 2010.

[The Impacts of Gentrification on Transportation and Social Support for Black Working-Poor Families in Portland, Oregon](#). Published by Portland State University's Transportation Research and Education Center in 2020.

[New Report Details Impact of Black Portlanders Displaced by Emanuel Hospital Expansion](#). Published by the Portland Mercury in 2022.

[Reclamation Towards the Futurity of Central Albina](#). Published by Emanuel Displaced Persons Association 2 and Portland State University in 2021.