

Submitter: Michael Miller

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care

Measure: SB1076

SB1076 is not a cure, nor a preventative, for the deep dysfunction in Oregon's sickcare delivery to the unhoused and unsheltered, but it does begin to address one aspect of that dysfunction: the casual hospital discharge of some of our most vulnerable citizens, without, seemingly, any thought to what happens to them next, which frequently undermines all the good that was done in the hospital setting and imperils, even costs, lives.

This winter season I have been caught between several intransigences: the stubborn and handicapped intellect of Frank Lee Thompson, a hospital system that ended their care and concern at the door, and rules protecting people's privacy over delivering them life saving care.

During this winter season, up to and including the first day of spring, Frank has been taken to the emergency room seven times for sepsis, pneumonia, and hypothermia, frequently having all three of these conditions.

The last time Frank was discharged from the hospital I considered it medical malpractice. His release back to the streets wasn't coordinated with anyone. The only footwear he had on were socks. They gave him his aftercare summery and medications, which he is intellectually incapable of understanding and following. He lost both the first night back on the streets.

Frank's been returned to the streets of Salem, without in socks and without a coat, in biting cold weather.

Frank's been allowed to leave the hospital with an oxygen tank, even with his impaired intellect and severe smoking habit has a history of being a fire danger to him and others.

Yes, Frank has, at times, left against medical advice, but even in those instances the hospital should reach out to the appropriate groups or agencies to let them know that an ill and vulnerable handicapped individual was returning himself to the streets.

I do indeed feel for hospital staff, for the ever-greater burden we place upon them, yet these horrors have to be abated, and SB1076 seems a rudimentary step toward that end.

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