

Submitter: Martin Bomalaski

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

Measure: HB4139

Dear Chair Nosse and Committee Members,

I am a physician specializing in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (PM&R) and Brain Injury Medicine. I am writing in support of HB 4139. Most of my career has been spent working on inpatient rehabilitation (IPR). Inpatient rehabilitation offers a unique opportunity for those with severe disabilities such as stroke, traumatic brain injury, spinal cord injury, and orthopedic polytrauma to receive specialized care from a multidisciplinary team, including intensive therapies, rehabilitation nursing, case management, and oversight from a PM&R physician. No other environment offers this level of expertise and intensity to promote maximum recovery in the weeks following these life altering events.

Unfortunately, Oregon ranks near the last in the nation in terms of available IPR beds for those that could benefit from such programs. This is due largely to Oregon's onerous Certificate of Need process, which has been weaponized in recent years by competing interests who seek to protect their share of a limited market. Two major projects to build new IPR facilities in the Portland metro area have been abandoned in the past year explicitly because of abuses to the Certificate of Need process, including endless petitions from competing interests, which makes getting final approval for these vital projects effectively impossible. The end result is that patients with these devastating conditions either receive subpar rehabilitation or must travel out of state to receive the specialized services they deserve.

This is why I am writing in support of HB 4139, which would exclude new IPR facilities from the Certificate of Need process. This would tremendously benefit the residents of Oregon who desperately need the high quality and intensive rehabilitation care that can only be provided with inpatient rehabilitation. It would also allow Oregon to start making progress in catching up with the rest of the nation in how we care for our most vulnerable community members.

Sincerely,

Martin Nicholas Bomalaski MD