

February 11, 2025

Oregon State Legislature  
House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care  
900 Court Street NE  
Salem, OR 97301  
*Submitted electronically via OLIS*

**RE: House Bill 2943, regarding HIV and syphilis screening in emergency departments**

Chair Nosse and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of Oregon's 61 community hospitals and the patients they serve, the Hospital Association of Oregon is opposed to House Bill 2943.

Oregon hospitals' emergency departments (EDs) are already stretched thin, serving as communities' point of care for a wide range of needs including life-threatening injuries and behavioral health crises. Problems with discharging patients who are ready to leave the hospital are further compounding the stress on EDs, where patients may be boarded in exam rooms and hallways while they wait for a bed to become available. Adding mandatory infectious disease testing—and the requirement to coordinate follow-up care—adds to the workload in Oregon's EDs.

HB 2943 would require new staff training and additional documentation processes and procedures, which will be difficult to integrate inside electronic health record (EHR) systems and ED workflows. The required expansion for programs like EPIC is costly and the EHR systems in some rural hospitals are not easily modified to include the opt-out requirement. Without an upgrade to the system, it is estimated that an ED would need a dedicated manager responsible for coordinating the process and workflow specific to meet the demand of scaled up testing alone. This will create delays in patient care and increase wait times. The inclusion of HIV and syphilis testing requirements could create backlogs in testing, specifically in rural areas where the testing may not occur in the hospital.

Additionally, we are concerned about other elements of the bill, which include:



- Section 1 (1)(b) creates a new definition of health care provider rather than using already established definition(s) in statute.
- Section 1 (7) - "A person who complies with the requirements of this section is not subject to an action for civil damages." What does this mean? Does this bill expose providers to additional risk?
- Section 6 has the bill take effect on the 91<sup>st</sup> day after session adjourns, which does not allow sufficient time for hospitals to implement the necessary protocols, policies, and changes within their EHRs.

If the state is interested in increasing access to testing for syphilis and HIV, we recommend the state support initiatives to increase communicable disease capacity for state and local county health departments.

Sincerely,



Travis Meuwissen  
Director of Government Affairs  
Hospital Association of Oregon

#### **About the Hospital Association of Oregon**

Founded in 1934, the Hospital Association of Oregon (HAO) is a mission-driven, nonprofit trade association representing Oregon's 61 hospitals. Together, hospitals are the sixth largest private employer statewide, employing more than 70,000 employees. Committed to fostering a stronger, safer, more equitable Oregon where all people have access to the high-quality care they need, the hospital association supports Oregon's hospitals so they can support their communities; educates government officials and the public on the state's health landscape and works collaboratively with policymakers, community based organizations and the health care community to build consensus on and advance health care policy benefiting the state's 4 million residents.



4000 Kruse Way Place  
Building 2, Suite 100  
Lake Oswego, Oregon, 97035

Phone: 503.636.2204  
Email: [info@oregonhospitals.org](mailto:info@oregonhospitals.org)  
Web: [oregonhospitals.org](http://oregonhospitals.org)