



February 18, 2025

Senate Committee on Health Care
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Senate Bill 140

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

Oregon acute care hospitals with psychiatric units are committed to ensuring that all patients receive appropriate care and patient rights are protected. Over the last six years, acute care hospitals have been caring for civilly committed patients who should have gone to the Oregon State Hospital (OSH) but cannot access that level of care. When community hospitals are caring for patients that should be receiving care at OSH, those beds are not available to other members of the community who need them. We believe Senate Bill 140 will support access to in-patient psychiatric care statewide.

Oregon community hospitals have become the default care setting for some of Oregon's most vulnerable residents. These changes started in December of 2019, when the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) announced a "temporary" pause on all OSH admissions for civilly committed patients. This led to more civilly committed patients being cared for in community hospital acute care settings. The following month, OHA transferred responsibility for payment for individuals on the OSH waitlist to the coordinated care organizations (CCO) and terminated the rate contracts with community acute care hospitals for payment for anyone on the wait list other than Medicaid recipients. Hospitals no longer are eligible for reimbursement by Medicare or any other OSH Waitlist/Extended-Care individuals not covered by Medicaid.

Legacy, PeaceHealth and Providence have been the primary providers of care for the civilly committed population for the past 6 years. Operating under what was "temporary," we have continued to provide compassionate care for patients even when we are not reimbursed at levels sufficient to cover the cost of care.

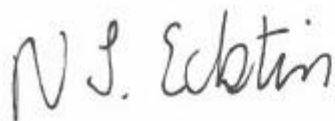
Recently, OHA proposed they would reduce inpatient psychiatric payments every 30 days to "incentivize" hospitals to discharge patients. We want to be very clear – the only reason these patients are in the hospital for such long periods is because there is no other place for them to go. We are caring for the most vulnerable people in our communities, and we strongly object to being penalized for doing so.

We believe SB 140 offers real solutions that will ease the way for civilly committed patients. SB 140 will help patients get to the appropriate level of care and in a way that is patient informed. There are two parts to our solution.

- First, develop rates that will reimburse hospitals to provide care for patients that are admitted to our facilities, regardless of their length of stay.
- Second, policy changes that would make waitlists transparent, create a universal interview process, and clarify accountability and responsibility for civilly committed patients.

We have heard the concerns from our community partners about some elements of the policy concepts, and we are committed to working with them to develop an amendment to address their concerns.

Thank you for the time today. We hope you will join us in supporting Senate Bill 140.



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