

Opposition to House Bill 3838

Stephanie Cook

Executive Director, Hillside a HumanGood Community

McMinnville, Oregon.

House Bill 3838 would have the opposite effect than intended. It is written with the idea of ensuring that seniors in community-based care settings have ample staffing from well-paid team members, eliminating agency use and “paying a fair wage.” It sounds great, in theory.

The problem arises when it comes time to pay for these team members at a staffing level deemed appropriate by an entity with no boots on the ground experience in our communities, no knowledge of our residents, our team members, our policies or our day-to-day operations. These are the folks who will decide how much we pay, what levels we staff at, and what benefits we are required to provide?

Most non-profit senior living communities operate on a very slim profit margin, with any excess going to the upkeep and improvements to the buildings and grounds where these residents live. Where is this extra funding going to come from? The answer is the very residents that struggle to afford these programs now. Medicaid’s future is uncertain, it also isn’t accepted in every community-based care setting; many are private pay only and the money comes from the residents.

What happens when the cost to provide care drives up the cost to receive care past the point that seniors are able to afford it? You end up with communities that can no longer afford to stay open. The cost of running a community-based care will become too much for companies and they will shut their doors, eliminating the care entirely, rather than “improving it” as this bill intends.

With more and more seniors needing care with every passing day, where will they go if communities are forced to increase fees higher than residents can afford to pay? Where will they go when communities are forced to close our doors when this sector becomes financially unmanageable due to bills like this?

Please look at the bigger picture. We work every single day with the sole intention of providing high quality care to our residents. Do not allow this bill to pass, or you will be responsible for more unhoused senior citizens lining the streets of our community, not receiving the care, compassion and quality of life they deserve. They deserve better.

I strongly oppose House Bill 3838 and I encourage you to do the same.

Thank you.

Stephanie Cook

Stephanie.cook@humangood.org