

Department of County Human Services



Aging, Disability & Veterans Services Division

March 25, 2025

Senator Patterson, Chair
Senate Committee On Health Care
900 Court Street, NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Support for SB 1188

Chair Patterson and Members of the Committee,

My name is Kristin Riley and I am the Multnomah County Public Guardian and Conservator (MCPGC). This letter is written in support of Senate Bill 1188 to fund a grant program with Oregon Public Guardian and Conservator (OPGC) to provide community and public guardian resources for vulnerable Oregonians experiencing hospital discharge delay and to financially support friends or family to initiate protective proceedings.

The Office of MCPGC sits within the Department of County Human Services, the Aging, Disability and Veteran Services Division, and has provided guardianship and conservatorship services to Multnomah County residents since 1977. We serve older adults, people with disabilities and Veterans who are legally incapacitated and/or financially incapable. My team provides care and safety planning, advocacy and supported decision-making to ensure protection from abuse, neglect and financial exploitation while maximizing autonomy, self-reliance and quality of life.

At any given point, our team of deputy public guardians have caseloads that exceed the national standards, and utilize support staff to maximize time spent on deputy-level, court appointed responsibilities. The lack of community/public guardian services in the state of Oregon has necessitated the need to serve as many protected persons as we can effectively and ethically handle, and also to provide an entirely separate set of services of helping people find alternatives to guardianship, giving non-legal advice regarding the legal process, statutory requirements, and most importantly, lesser restrictive and costly interventions. For this reason, we have a supervisor position who manages not just the court process for new intakes, but also the high volume of consultations and referrals we receive on a weekly basis, and the 300-400 information and assistance calls we take per year. Many of these are friends and family who are fit and able to serve as guardians, but do not have the financial means for legal representation in a protective proceeding.

Hospitals are our primary referral source for medically stable patients who lack decision-making capacity, often pending discharges that are significantly delayed while awaiting appropriate post-acute care placement in the community. These patients have no one to support them in making informed decisions and will not be accepted for admission to

appropriate facilities without a guardian. They often decompensate in an environment not suitable for long-term care needs, caught in the middle of an imminent need for discharge and the waitlist times for community/public guardians. A secondary outcome becomes a lack of beds for other critically ill patients needing hospital level of care, with costs being passed on to the consumer and greater community.

As nationally-certified professional fiduciaries, MCPGC utilizes our training, practice standards, ethical guidelines and expertise to navigate complex care systems and make intake decisions based on statutory and program requirements. Alternatives and lesser restrictive options will always be explored and pursued, however historically it has been demonstrated that the need for guardianship resources and access will continue to be significant, even when the circumstances indicate guardianship is the very last resort intervention.

I strongly support additional funding being proposed by OPG to expand efforts to bolster community/public (and family) guardianship resources. These targeted improvements can bring about fundamental changes in our current system to support our community and prevent physical and financial harm to Oregonians who rely on court-appointed fiduciaries to keep them healthy and safe.

If you have questions regarding this request, please contact me at 503-988-4567.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mohammad Bader". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Mohammad" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Bader".

Mohammad Bader
Director
Department of County Human Services