



April 1, 2025

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

**Re: SB 1188, relating to decision-making supports for individuals with complex health care needs**

Chair Patterson, Vice-Chair Hayden, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of Oregon's 61 community hospitals, the Hospital Association of Oregon supports SB 1188, a bill that establishes a grant program for the purpose of increasing the capacity of community-based guardianship programs and county public guardian programs to provide guardianship, conservatorship and supported decision making services to individuals with complex health care needs who are being discharged from hospitals.

Hospitalized patients who lack decision-making capacity and do not have a family member or friend available to serve as a surrogate decision maker may need a guardian to decide their post-acute care path. Some of our members' patients have experienced six- to eight-month delays in the hospital waiting for the appointment of a public guardian. Many such patients have complex care needs, and a hospital environment can be unsettling for them.

The Joint Task Force on Hospital Discharge Challenges was established specifically to address challenges in the discharge process and issued a final report on November 12, 2024. The task force recommended increasing support for legal guardians, in recognition that a contributing factor to discharge delays is a shortage of public guardians. The Oregon Public Guardian Conservator Program (OPG) reported to the task force that in 2023, 53% of then-current clients were hospitalized and unable to be safely discharged at the time of referral to the OPG.<sup>1</sup> The report also estimated that 500 or more

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<sup>1</sup> Recommendations of the Joint Task Force on Hospital Discharge Challenges at 24 (Nov. 12, 2024), available at [Recommendations of the Joint Task Force on Hospital Discharge Challenges](#).



individuals in the community may have unmet needs for guardianship and many more may need less restrictive forms of supported decision making.

SB 1188 will help patients who no longer need acute care services plan their transition to more appropriate care settings. Many patients face delays because they do not have access to a public guardian or need a more basic level of assistance to make health care decisions. The hospital association supports SB 1188 because it helps patients and promotes access to acute care services.

Sincerely,



Troy Duker  
Director of Government Affairs  
Hospital Association of Oregon

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

Founded in 1934, the Hospital Association of Oregon Association (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 four million residents.

