

Submitter:

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On Behalf Of:

Committee:

Senate Committee On Health Care

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

SB1570

As a nurse I have an ethical obligation to take care of my patients regardless of their status in custody or otherwise. I have worked with Portland police, department of corrections and other related law enforcement agencies.

In my experience these agencies are understanding and respectful of the care and required clinical decisions of healthcare staff while caring for these patients. Officers working with ICE on the other hand clearly do not have the training in how to interact with the hospital system and have demonstrated a significant lack of respect or understanding of the important role that healthcare staff play in clinical decision making. When ICE officers are seen walking the unit without identification, while wearing face covering and armed it makes the hospital an unsafe environment.

Portland police, Department of corrections and other agencies do not act in the same way that ICE has been seen to do while in the hospital environment. It is standard practice for law enforcement to work directly with healthcare staff to make sure the hospital is a safe and effective environment. Traditionally law enforcement, police and corrections are respectful and understanding of the role that nurses play in protecting patients and defer to healthcare workers in regard to medical concerns.

ICE on the other hand has been observed in our hospital to violate this basic expectation. I have personally taken care of patients in ICE custody who were denied basic care including changing out of their street clothes or allowing to have an IV placed by nursing staff. ICE has pushed early discharges and physically blocked staff from caring for patients.