

February 3, 2014

To: House Interim Committee on Health Care

From: Joey Razzano

RE: HB 4108 Pilot Project to collect and repurpose durable medical equipment

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Chair Greenlick, Vice-Chair Keny-Guyer, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Joey Razzano. My daughter, Jade and I shared our story about used durable medical equipment and the need for HB 4108 with you during the November, 2013 Legislative Days. I want to share it with you again today to reiterate my support for HB 4108. The bill would create a pilot project to allow people with disabilities to donate and receive repurposed durable medical equipment, plus receive evaluation, fitting and repair services.

Jade depends on equipment every day and sometimes we have to look outside the “new” durable medical equipment market to make sure has the right equipment to keep her safe. HB 4108 creates a safer way to access the used durable medical equipment market than currently exists because it provides equipment refurbishing and fitting services.

A few years ago, Jade was falling out of her bed at night. This is dangerous for any child, but was particularly dangerous because of Jade’s disabilities. We asked Jade’s doctor for help. The doctor prescribed a “Sleep Safe” bed which is different from a standard medical bed because it has more features to keep people from falling out. We started working with our insurance company to get the sleep safe bed, which cost almost \$7,000. We have good insurance but the 20% copay can still mean that we pay thousands of dollars out of pocket for equipment. Jade also receives Medicaid. Obviously a request of this size takes time to work through the insurance system, but with each night in her old bed, Jade was risking serious injury. I had to do something to protect Jade while the insurance company was processing her bed prescription.

We asked friends with kids with special needs where we could get a bed. There was nowhere to

go outside insurance. I was on Facebook a few weeks later and another parent had posted “free medical bed” and I was the first to say I wanted it. I had to drive over an hour into Washington to pick up the used bed. Although the bed was dirty, had no installation instructions and was too big for Jade, we were happy that it was a little bit better than Jade’s old bed.

A couple months later, our primary insurance authorized a sleep safe bed for Jade. I went back on Facebook to offer the “free medical bed” I picked up in Washington. Within hours I had two families from Corvallis asking for the bed. Since the two families knew each other, they agreed that the more disabled child should get it. Of course, they had to drive up to pick it up at their expense and time.

Durable medical equipment is in such high demand that families feel like they hit the lottery when they get equipment passed on to them. The problem with this informal exchange system is that the equipment often does not properly fit the new child, or it needs repairs. Families have no place to take the equipment for fitting, modifications or repairs. Instead, they make do with equipment that “sort of” works because it is better than not having it at all.

An equipment bank pilot project to repurpose medical equipment is a great idea! It would save the state financially because the state could pay for people to get repurposed equipment at a fraction of the price of new equipment. Additionally, it would support families immensely by giving them access to equipment, fitting, modification or repair services. Families would also benefit from having a place to donate equipment instead of keeping it in their garages.

Thank you for your consideration of HB 4108. I have shared only a few stories with you today, but I have many more that demonstrate how much people with disabilities and their families need access to programs like the one proposed in HB 4108.

Joey Razzano

Portland, OR