



Legacy Health
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February 16, 2015

Senator Laurie Monnes Anderson
Chair, Senate Committee on Health Care
Members of the Senate Committee on Health Care

Re: Legacy Supports SB 132

Legacy Health is a major nonprofit health care provider in Oregon and Southwest Washington. With six medical centers throughout the Portland-Vancouver region, Legacy treats more than half a million outpatients annually and admits more than 56,000 people each year to our facilities.

On behalf of the almost 10,000 people we employ, Legacy Health asks your support of Senate Bill 132, which would make intentionally, knowingly or recklessly assaulting a hospital worker a Class C felony. Currently 35 states, including Washington, have passed enhanced criminal penalties for assaults against hospital employees.

Unfortunately, intentional violence against hospital workers by patients, their families and other visitors is increasing at an alarming rate, despite our best efforts and extensive staff training to secure and defuse potentially violent situations. This is not just a Legacy Health problem, or a State of Oregon problem, but a disturbing national trend.


Oregon Statute, ORS 163.165, already includes professions who, like hospital staff, are required to serve all members of the public: emergency medical services (ambulance) personnel, youth correction facility staff, public transit vehicle operators, taxi drivers.

While hospitals have a legal and moral responsibility to care for all patients, regardless of the risk, it is also our duty to do all we can to protect the safety of our employees. As a result, Legacy has an extensive security plan for all of our clinical units, including increasing security staffing. Additionally, we developed an educational program to improve how we manage assaultive behavior within our facilities. This includes Management of Assaultive Behavior (MOAB) training that is designed to teach and empower all of our staff, clinical and security, to identify potentially violent and aggressive situations, to prevent or de-escalate aggressive behavior, as well as self-defense methods.

Senate Bill 132 does not remove any protections for mentally ill or impaired patients who may be violent, but are not able to form criminal intent. It simply gives hospital staff in Oregon the same rights and protection of their counterparts in 35 other states, including Washington State.

Legacy Health urges you to support Senate Bill 132.

Sincerely,


Everett W. Newcomb III, DO, FACC, FACP
Chief Operating Officer