

# Advocacy Coalition

of Seniors and People with Disabilities 5517 7th Avenue SE Salem OR 97306

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Date: April 6, 2015

Re: HB 3378 – Hospital Discharge Planning with Lay Caregivers

Representative Mitch Greenlick, Chair  
House Committee on Health Care

Chair Greenlick,

My name is Bill Olson, Co-Chair of the Advocacy Coalition of Seniors and people with Disabilities. The Coalition consists of approximately 80 individuals and organizations. Our purpose is to protect and promote services for the low income elderly and people with disabilities. In support of that mission, we focus on legislative and budget issues that impact those populations.

The Coalition enthusiastically supports HB 3378. We believe this bill will provide much needed support and encouragement to family caregivers and enable them to provide better care to family members and friends after they are discharged from the hospital.

We know from studies by the Family Caregiver Alliance (<https://caregiver.org/selected-caregiver-statistics>) and AARP among others, that family members and friends will continue to be the primary caregiving resource for the foreseeable future. And these caregivers contribute significant economic value to our communities. One recent study valued these services at approximately \$450 billion per year. [*Valuing the Invaluable: 2011 Update, The Economic Value of Family Caregiving. AARP Public Policy Institute.*]

Many lay caregivers are thrust into that capacity as a result of a sudden trauma to a family member or friend. In the case of our family, my wife received a call informing her that our 21 year-old son had suffered a traumatic brain injury (TBI) in a skiing accident. He was in a coma and the prognosis for his survival was uncertain. And, if he survived, what his condition would be. Needless to say, we were totally unprepared to become caregivers. I recall reading everything available in the hospital library on the topic. But there was very little in the way of counseling on what to expect in the longer term if my son recovered. Or what resources might be available to us.

My son's injury occurred in 1983. I believe there is now greater awareness of TBI. Certainly we have all heard that it is one of the "signature injuries" of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. And more resources have been developed over the years. However, the very fact that you are considering this legislation indicates that we still have work to do. As our fathers and mothers live longer and the number of persons with Alzheimer's increases, the burden on family caregivers grows accordingly. Anything that can be done to ease this burden and support our caregivers should be done.

Your Committee's approval of HB 3378 would be one such action.

Thank you hearing this bill; and for the opportunity to testify on its behalf.

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Cc: Committee Members

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