

Providence Health & Services
4400 N.E. Halsey St., Building 2
Suite 599
Portland, OR 97213
www.providence.org/oregon



April 10, 2015

The Honorable Mitch Greenlick
Chair, House Committee on Health Care
State Capitol
Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: House Bill 3087, Patient referral notification

Dear Representative Greenlick and members of the committee:

Providence Health & Services takes our responsibility to provide each patient with a connected care experience very seriously. We have a long, respected history of ensuring that individuals have the information and support needed to make critical health care choices for themselves or on behalf of their family members.

Based on our experience, Providence has serious concerns about reopening the debate over patient referral notifications. Although presented under the guise of "patient choice," House Bill 3087 has the potential to hinder a clinician's ability to care for their patients in a personal and connected way. In a world of complex health care choices, the relationship between patient and provider is critical and must include support in navigating the health care system. Without this support, in many cases, the process can be so overwhelming that patients delay or forgo care all together.

The current regulations, established by the Oregon Health Authority after countless stakeholder meetings and revisions, are not ideal for parties on either side of this issue – but that's what compromise requires. Over the last five months, providers across the care continuum have implemented new processes and work-flows to comply with final rules. These efforts include posting a notice about patient choice in clinics and hospitals across the state and providing written or verbal notice of patient choice at the time care is established - similar to the notification required by HIPAA.

Mandating scripted communications between doctors and their patients, and imposing significant penalties for failure to comply, introduces an uncomfortable legal compliance process that changes the dynamics of important, and often difficult, conversations. Providence respectfully requests that the current rules be given adequate time to work and the committee not pass House Bill 3087.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our feedback.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Doug Walta".

Doug Walta, MD
Chief Executive, Clinical Programs and Physician Strategy
Providence Health & Services - Oregon