



Legacy Health
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March 7, 2017

Representative Jeff Barker, Chair
Members of the House Committee on Judiciary

Re: Legacy Supports HB 2620

Legacy Health is Oregon's only locally owned nonprofit health care provider in the Portland-Vancouver area and mid-Willamette Valley with seven hospitals and more than 100 primary, specialty and urgent care clinics.

On behalf of the almost 13,000 people we employ, Legacy Health asks your support of HB 2620, which would make intentionally, knowingly or recklessly assaulting a hospital worker a Class C felony. Currently 39 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.

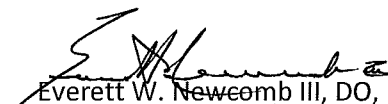
Oregon Statute, ORS 163.165, already includes professions who, like hospital staff, are required to serve all members of the public: emergency medical services (ambulance) personnel, youth correction facility staff, public transit vehicle operators, taxi drivers.

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 increased 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.

HB 2620 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 39 other states, including Washington.

Legacy Health urges you to support HB 2620.

Sincerely,


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