



Testimony in Support of HB 2004

Linda Ramsey

March 2, 2017

Chair Keny-Guyer and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony in support of House Bill 2004. My name is Linda Ramsey; I am a registered nurse working in Home Health at Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center and a member of the Oregon Nurses Association.

I want to tell a story about a patient whose life was changed because he was able to obtain stable housing.

James had been homeless for 20 years. He had substance abuse issues and endured a very unstable life. He ended up in our hospital gravely ill with liver failure and GI bleeding. When James left the hospital he had no place to go, nowhere to store his medications and was unable to make needed lifestyle changes. He later returned to the hospital and spent 3 weeks in the ICU seriously ill. Fortunately, James was directly connected to a housing program that is based on the "housing first" model, placing him into a basic apartment that came with intensive case management.

This is where I met James. On my first visit he was emotionally unstable and could not manage his medications. As his home health nurse, I helped to organize his medications to keep him on track and over the course of a month; I was able to teach him how to do it himself. We worked to manage his diabetes and insulin, & ensured he made it to regular doctor and alcohol rehabilitation appointments.

Over the course of a month I saw an enormous difference in James' demeanor, health and ability to follow through with self-care. Stable housing made all the difference in this man's life. Achieving quality health outcomes demands that all patients and families have access to fair, affordable housing. HB 2004 is a vital step toward achieving this goal.

I urge your support for HB 2004. Thank you.