



SALEM HEALTH

An OHSU Partner

To: Chair Barker, Members of the House Judiciary Committee
From: Cheryl Nester Wolfe, RN, President/CEO Salem Health
RE: Support of HB 2175
Date: April 10, 2017

Chair Barker and members of the House Judiciary Committee. Thank you for accepting this memo as written testimony supporting HB 2175. Salem Health is an OHSU partner offering care to people in and around Oregon's mid-Willamette Valley. We have hospitals in Salem and Dallas, a medical group of primary and specialty care providers, plus other affiliated services. Our Dallas hospital is a critical-access hospital. Our Salem hospital is a Magnet®-recognized facility, a regional referral center and one of the largest acute-care hospitals in Oregon. Salem Health is the area's largest private employer, with about 4,000 full and part-time employees.

Salem Health has the unique distinction of operating the busiest Emergency Department from the Canadian border to Los Angeles. We have approximately 110,000 visits to our Salem ER each year. We are continually evaluating ways to better meet the needs of our community and individuals facing medical emergencies that benefit from an available bed and attentive medical personnel.

Salem Hospital Emergency Department has continued to grow as a location for individuals to sober. There are approximately ten people in the ED spending 10-14 hours a day sobering. While Salem Health is available to take care of whoever feels they have an emergent need, this does impact others in the community benefitting from service because of the length of time a bed is occupied by those sobering. This is not always the best solution for patient care, as emergency rooms are not treatment centers and it is the most expensive entry point in the continuum of care.

HB 2175 is a common sense bill that continues the work this body pursued in 2015. Currently there are six total sobering centers in Oregon. This bill would allow the Oregon Health Authority to add additional sobering centers to its registration process and grant them limited liability by extending civil and criminal immunity to facilities acting in good faith. Moving individuals to a sobering center would help reduce the congestion and costs in our emergency room while at the same time placing people in a safe facility to recover and connect to treatment services. We have been meeting with other community stakeholders this past year to discuss ways to better serve this population. HB 2175 is an important piece of legislation that would help facilitate this process. Thank you for your consideration.