



To: Chair Barker, Members of the House Judiciary Committee  
From: Salem Emergency Physicians Service, P.C.  
RE: Support HB 2175  
Date: April 10, 2017

Chair Barker and members of the House Judiciary Committee:

We are writing today to lend our support to HB 2175. Salem Emergency Physicians Service has been providing emergency care and treatment to our community for over 40 years. Salem Hospital operates the busiest emergency department on the West Coast between Los Angeles and Canada, treating over 110,000 patients annually. We consist of 40 emergency medicine specialists, and are committed to providing the highest quality care in a safe, compassionate and efficient manner for patients, their families and our community.

Salem Emergency Physicians support HB 2175. This legislation would help our community pursue solutions that would provide a safe and appropriate place to take individuals who are experiencing non-life threatening intoxication but who are unsafe to discharge to an unsupervised setting. It would help slow the growing burden on local emergency rooms regarding overcapacity.

On a daily basis, our Emergency Department is occupied by multiple patients who are there for no other reason than intoxication. Because there is no other option to sober in a supervised and safe environment, these patients occupy a room in the ER, often for up to 12 hours, until they can be safely discharged in a more sober state. Meanwhile, this room is not available to treat other patients and increases the amount of time other patients wait in the waiting room. Additionally, intoxicated individuals often pose a safety risk to the staff due to the lack of behavior control they exhibit while intoxicated.

HB 2715 would provide a framework and opportunity for communities to develop solutions that would help alleviate pressure on over taxed emergency departments and local jails, while better serving this population. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important legislation.

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