

May 17, 2017

Oregon State Legislature
Senate Committee on Human Services
900 Court St. NE
Salem Oregon 97301

Re: House Bill 3090 – ED Discharge Guidelines

Chair Gelser and Senate Committee on Human Services Members:

The Oregon Association of Hospitals and Health Systems (Association) wants to thank Chair Gelser and the committee members for bringing this important conversation up for discussion. We support the direction of the amendment from Representative Keny Guyer and want to thank her for her leadership and collaboration on this work.

Oregon hospital emergency departments provide frontline care to approximately a quarter of a million people in mental health crisis every year. Hospitals and their emergency departments are often the primary source of acute care services for people with mental illness and substance abuse issues. Hospitals are legally obligated to provide stabilizing treatment for all people who enter their emergency departments, including those in mental health crisis. But the goal of the emergency department is stabilization, not long-term treatment, and people with acute mental health conditions need a more appropriate, effective setting for treatment recovery.

The Association in collaboration with its members and NAMI created and implemented the Inpatient Psychiatric Discharge Guidelines for patients hospitalized for mental health treatment. These guidelines incorporate related requirements applicable to all lay caregivers as well as clarifications regarding the disclosure of protected health information.

The Association has already shared our thoughts on this legislation with Representative Keny-Guyer and our concerns with the inpatient psychiatric discharge guidelines not translating to the emergency department readily. With that said, the association and its membership is fully engaged in mirroring the inpatient psychiatric discharge guidelines development process to create guidelines that fit the specific needs of mental health patients being released from a hospital emergency department.

Again, the Association thanks the committee for their time and consideration of this important issue and we look forward to working on this as we move forward.

Thank you,
Craig Campbell
Oregon Association of Hospital and Health Systems