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I want to thank Senator Gelser and Members of the Senate Human Services Committee today for their time. I come to you wearing two hats. The first is that I am a licensed acupuncturist and have been practicing for 18 years. Though licensed acupuncturists are not included in the scope of Senate Bill 48, I want to say how important it is to mandate trainings in certain areas.

Every practitioner has a required amount of continuing education units (ceu) to renew their licenses. For an acupuncturist, it is broken down into both oriental medicine classes as well as allopathic.

In the State of Oregon, there was a statute in 2015, ORS 413.590, where we were mandated to include pain management ceus as a result of the opioid epidemic. It is not that I would not seek out ceus related to this, but having it required to renew my license gave me the push to make that education happen. If I did not, I could not renew my license, therefore I could not practice. It was as simple and easy as that. So of course, it happened. Suicide rates have been increasing and is the 10th leading cause of death in the US. There are an average of 121 people per day that die by suicide. These numbers have been increasing continuously year after year.

Which leads me to my second and more important hat.

On May 8th, 2014, my husband Jesse's brain broke. He shot and killed our four year old daughter Maribella, then himself. I found them a couple of hours later.

He was my best friend, a devoted husband, brother, son, and an amazing father of our two girls. He was 34 years old. She was my sunshine. Her laughter contagious, her compassion humbling, and she was so very smart. Her eyes sparkled as she came up with ways to entertain people. She was just like her father in her athletic abilities. At four years old, she had goals. She wanted to learn to read and ride her bike without training wheels by the time she was five. Her life got cut short of those goals by forty four days. The ripple effects of their murder/suicide are as just as fresh today, almost three years later as they were that rainy day in May.

Suicide is preventable.

People will often see their PCP, a variety of other health care professionals, or behavior health specialists within the year they die by suicide.

Those of us in the health care field have an opportunity and responsibility everyday with our patients to ask basic questions that would screen for suicidal ideology. The training and treatment protocols are constantly changing and improving. As with any disease, it is vital to stay up to date on ways to screen and support vulnerable people who are considering suicide as an option.

With this law, it will require training to those in contact with people at risk for suicide.

With this law, lives will be saved.

With this law, someone may not have to experience the pain I do every second of everyday from this past almost three years.

We need to do a better job with our screening and support, and this is absolutely one way to make that happen.

Thank you.

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