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Oregon State Senate Committee on Health Care  
Via e-mail to: [shc.exhibits@oregonlegislature.gov](mailto:shc.exhibits@oregonlegislature.gov)

February 6, 2018

Chair Monnes Anderson, Vice Chair DeBoer, and Distinguished Members of the Senate Committee on Health Care:

I write to you in support of Senate Bill 1539 on behalf of the Lane County Medical Society. Prior to serving as the Executive Director of LCMS, I worked as a hospital counsel and volunteered with various programs advocating for our elderly neighbors. Senate Bill 1539 expands a successful program connecting primary care physicians with specialists in child and adolescent psychiatry to physicians serving adults who need prompt advice from a psychiatrist.

I write to stress the particular importance of this service, given the attending physician's ability to determine mental capacity. I volunteer as an advocate in a memory care facility, advocating for adults who live in the gray areas of capacity. Most receive primary care from dedicated, but often overworked, physicians through the Oregon Health Plan. They rely upon the facility to transport them for medical care and to relay critical health information to their providers. These physicians must often effectively make the critical decision of whether a patient will remain in a locked facility, under the influence of drugs that may impact their cognition, or should receive care in a less restrictive setting.

Ideally, we would rely on the due process and deliberation of a court regarding such restrictions on liberty. In my experience, the courtroom is a long way from the residential care facility. Many patients lack an effective advocate to ensure their rights receive respect. Their physician becomes an important guarantor of their rights. A physician in that position deserves the best support we can give them.

Additional psychiatric expertise can also help people remain independent. Psychiatrists may assist in finding medications or resources that preserve a patient's ability to remain in the community. This is particularly important in light of the fiscal knife's edge that Project Independence habitually walks.

In sum, SB 1539 is far more than a just a safety blanket for primary care doctors—it provides support for the independence and civil rights of some of our most vulnerable neighbors. I hope that you will support it.

Sincerely,



Marshall L. Wilde  
Executive Director