

House Health Care Committee Members:

We are health care professionals and are very concerned about the impact HB 4135 will have on very vulnerable, conscious but demented individuals who may be unable to eat or drink on their own. This bill if passed, would remove the basic rights of food and water from such people whether or not they agree with this.

HB 4135 masquerades as a bill that would simply change the Advance Directive form in hospitals, nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and foster homes. However, this bill is so much more than a change in the Advance Directive.

HB 4135 is backed by corporate insurance companies attempting to save money by removing patient protections and allowing a surrogate to make decisions against the will of the patient. It will put very vulnerable people at risk of starvation or dehydration at the very time family members and health care professionals should be providing the most compassionate care.

Death by starvation and/or dehydration is extremely painful and includes multiple side effects such as internal organ pain, breakdown and bleeding of skin and mucous membranes, vitamin deficiency effects, etc. Think of what you or one of your family members would experience in such a situation. Are you willing to give this egregious bill a chance to pass and be signed into law?

If this bill passes, it will be only a matter of time before anyone with any degree of dementia will have a "duty to die" which would then be encoded into statute in Oregon.

Please protect vulnerable Oregonians and do NOT pass HB 4135 out of committee!

Thank you,
George Middlekauff, MD, PhD
Board Certified Psychiatrist

Linda Middlekauff, RN, BSN, LCCE
Nurse & Childbirth Educator