

Hello,

I have worked for Benco, a non-profit serving people with disabilities in Corvallis, for 20 years. Our motto is "Caring Without Limits" and we get to put this into practice each minute that we get the privilege of working with, supporting, and advocating for the diverse population of people in our services. The support needs range from being fairly limited to being very intensive. We support individuals to access medical care and who are regularly hospitalized for a variety of reasons. In each of those situations we advocate for the best quality of treatment and care. Often we represent the persons wishes and assist with communication and in understanding treatment options.

We support an individual who in April was diagnosed with pneumonia at the Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center here in Corvallis. The person did receive a COVID-19 test due to fever of over 101\*, congestion, and cough after much persuasion and insistence from our staff. We were not allowed to provide any support to the person while they were hospitalized. Although, Benco staff did advocate and receive updates through phone conversations. At discharge, the attending physician recommended that the person be discharged on hospice with comfort measures only. This person experiences severe cognitive impairment, is unable to speak, and receives all nutrients through a g-tube. He has suffered pneumonia at least once a year for the last several years. After medical treatment and antibiotics, he is back to his typical fun loving, attentive, and content self. He lives a wonderful life and receives great quality of care through 24 hour nursing staff and Direct Support Professionals employed by Benco. Nothing about this medical condition or situation was different than situations he has recovered from previously, yet this time at discharge, the physician wanted to end nutrition care and let him die. As a team we supported the individual through several discussions and it was decided by his guardian that he would not be discontinuing nutrition and would not need hospice. He has made a full recovery and is experiencing a wonderful quality of life. We experienced feeling pressure to make end of life decisions when this individual was not at the end of his life. It was a very difficult situation to be a part of.

I ask that you support Legislative Concept 52. This will ensure that there is no assumption about a person's value based on their disability. It is essential that we treat all people fairly based on their needs and their wishes and rely on the people who know them best to be able to support and advocate for them, especially in times of emergency, illness and receiving medical care.

Thank you for your consideration of this important issue.

Sincerely,

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