



January 28, 2019

Oregon State Legislature
Senate Committee on Health Care
900 Court St. NE
Salem Oregon 97301

Re: Senate Bill 141 – Caring Contacts and Access Assessment

Chair Senator Laurie Monnes Anderson and Members of the Senate Committee on Health Care:

My name is Elizabeth Hutter and I am the Chief Executive Officer at Cedar Hills Hospital in Portland, OR. Cedar Hills Hospital is a psychiatric hospital servicing individuals with mental health and substance use issues. Cedar Hills Hospital supports SB 141, which would provide transitional funding to assist hospitals with the costs associated with the development or contracting of a caring contacts program to support patients during this time after release from hospitals.

As background, HB 3090 from 2017 rulemaking requires all hospital emergency departments to provide or contract to provide caring contacts to all patients with behavioral health crises and those who are suicidal or have suicidal ideations within 48 hours.

HB 3019 from 2017 rulemaking requires insurance coverage for case management and care coordination. Hospitals will work to establish contracts with payers that adequately reimburse for this added follow-up but this will not happen overnight. OAHHS on behalf of its hospitals are requesting transitional funding for hospitals.


Although Cedar Hills Hospital does not have an emergency department, we work as a partner with many emergency departments around the state and support this effort to better facilitate caring contacts being made within 48 hours of discharge.

A second requirement within HB 3090 and the rulemaking is a requirement that hospitals attempt to schedule a follow-up appointment within seven days to all patients with behavioral health crises. The issue that hospitals encounter is that there is not enough available appointments at a timely manner that can provide the level of care needed and accept the patients' reimbursement.

Cedar Hills Hospital finds it very difficult to schedule follow-up appointments within 7 days of discharge for clients with certain types of health coverage. Appointments are either not available for thirty or more days or clients have to travel far to attend an appointment within the seven day period and transportation is an issue for many of our clients. At Cedar Hills Hospital, we provide after-care planning for between 300 to 400 clients across our inpatient and outpatient facilities.

We support OHA to study the existing barriers to follow-up appointments and provide recommendations to the legislature to ensure we continue to understand the needs in our community.

Respectfully,


Elizabeth Hutter
Chief Executive Officer
Cedar Hills Hospital