



March 19, 2019

The Honorable Andrea Salinas  
Chair, House Health Care Committee  
State Capitol  
Salem, Oregon

Re: HB 2217 – Expansion of Death with Dignity Act

Dear Representative Salinas and members of the committee,

On behalf of Providence Health & Services, thank you for the opportunity to outline our serious concerns regarding House Bill 2217. Our opposition is grounded in our basic values of respect for the sanctity of life and compassionate care for dying and vulnerable persons.

House Bill 2217 would expand Oregon's existing Death with Dignity Act by allowing for other means than oral administration of medication. As "delivering by another method" is not defined in the proposed bill, it is unclear what other options this bill may make available as the law currently prohibits the use of lethal injection. New options may result in harm or errors in medication administration thereby creating patient distress and unintended outcomes. Expanding the method of self-administration may also have other disruptive consequences and threaten providers' conscience protections.

Providence is an innovative health care system that strives to offer compassionate, high quality and state-of-the-art care for our patients. We believe that people are stewards of their own lives, but we may not unduly prolong nor hasten the natural process of dying. We know that our patients facing end-of-life issues have complex physical, social, emotional and spiritual needs. To address these needs, we offer a comprehensive array of services, including a focus on palliative care while allowing natural death.

Our hospice and palliative care teams, chaplains and counselors address pain and end-of-life suffering in a holistic way. Our services provide treatment for emotional pain, depression, fear and spiritual distress. We also work to provide support that ensure our patients spend their final months, days and years in comfort and preserving the dignity of the patient as they manage their end-of-life journey. And these services are provided across the entire continuum of care, including hospitals, clinics and our patients' homes. For these reasons, we continue to advocate for increased support and resources for hospice and palliative care programs that provide compassionate, pain-relieving comfort and care for those who are at the end of life.

We respectfully request that the committee not advance House Bill 2217 and instead continue to advocate for policies that improve access to palliative and hospice care in Oregon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tim Serban".

Tim Serban  
Chief Mission Integration Officer  
Providence Health & Services - Oregon Region