



The Honorable Jeff Barker
Chair, Senate Committee on Health Care
State Capitol, Hearing Room E
Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: Chronic Disease Coalition Supports Senate Bill 796

Dear Chair Barker and members of the House Committee on Business and Labor,

The Chronic Disease Coalition is a nonprofit organization that represents patients with a wide range of chronic health conditions, including diabetes, multiple sclerosis, rheumatoid arthritis and kidney disease, to name just a few. For patients with these serious health conditions, organ transplantation is often their only long-term treatment option, and in some cases, the only thing that will keep them alive. On behalf of our members and allies in Oregon, we urge you to support Senate Bill 796, which protects living organ donors from facing workplace and insurance discrimination.

Currently, the majority of organ donation occurs through deceased donors, which means patients may wait years before receiving a transplant – time some people can't afford. Every day, 22 people die while waiting for a transplant¹. Living organ donation not only decreases the time for individuals waiting on a transplant; living organs also tend to survive longer, and transplant recipients experience fewer complications. Despite this, living donors accounted for only 20 percent of transplants in Oregon last year².

In Oregon, organ donation is not qualified as a medical condition that allows people to take a protected leave of absence from work, creating a risk in the workplace for people who would otherwise donate. Additionally, living donors commonly experience insurance discrimination, which makes it difficult to change or obtain both health and life insurance³. These factors negatively impact the likelihood a person will donate.

SB 796 would address these challenges and promote living donation by:

- Revising Oregon employment statutes to include living organ donation as acceptable “family leave” covered by employers
- Preventing insurance companies from declining or limiting coverage to a person for a life insurance policy, health insurance policy or long-term care insurance policy based on their status as a living donor
- Preventing insurance companies from considering a person’s status as a living organ donor when determining premium rates for their health plan

On behalf of the 851 transplant candidates waiting for an organ donor in Oregon, I urge you to support this commonsense legislation, and protect living organ donors from discrimination.

Sincerely,



Scott Bruun, Executive Director, Chronic Disease Coalition

¹<https://unos.org/data/transplant-trends/>

²<https://optn.transplant.hrsa.gov/data/view-data-reports/state-data/#>

³<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4194161/>

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Chronic Disease Coalition

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