

Hello,

My name is Marie Gerdtz and I live in Portland. I'm writing in support of SB 1606

As a case manager for adults with developmental disabilities, I believe that this legislation is vital. People with disabilities deserve the ability to access treatment and make informed decisions about their health the same as every person.

I have some experience with the need for support providers to be allowed to assist patients with disabilities in the hospital. In my previous job as a direct support professional, I supported a man who woke up one day with a sudden, painful growth on his face. I transported him to the ER, where we spent several hours waiting and meeting briefly with triage staff. I felt that his concerns were being written off because of his difficulty explaining the pain. When we were finally able to meet with a doctor, he was admitted to the hospital and taken to emergency surgery to treat a sinus infection that had spread to his eye and brain (causing the swelling). I believe that if he had not been allowed a support person, he would not have received the advocacy he needed to get emergency treatment.

Thank you for your consideration,

Marie Gerdtz
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Support. Advocate. Empower.

Assisting people with disabilities to live empowered, self-determined lives through community connections.

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