

Good morning Co-Chair Courtney, Co-Chair Kotek and members of the committee. My name is Sarah Frazzini and I am the Executive Director of Benco in Corvallis. Our motto is “Caring Without Limits”. We support individuals with disabilities to access medical care and who are regularly hospitalized for a variety of reasons. In those situations we advocate for the best quality of treatment and have always stayed with and supported the individual throughout their hospitalization, up until the COVID-19 pandemic.

Today, I share with you a series of events which took place in early April. A 64 year old gentleman who transitioned from Fairview in 1999 resides in one of our homes with housemates. He experiences severe cognitive impairment, is quadriplegic, has chronic respiratory disease, receives all nutrition through a G Tube, and communicates through body language. On April 2<sup>nd</sup> he arrived at Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center with symptoms of pneumonia and symptoms consistent with COVID-19.

He faced immediate judgement as illustrated by hospital staff stating he would NOT be given the COVID-19 test, as he had a history of pneumonia and “it was likely just that.” After persistent requests the test was finally administered, but one nearby hospital staff stated that “it was a waste of valuable PPE.” This man was made to feel as if he was less worthy of receiving essential healthcare supports, due to the fact that his quality of life was deemed less valuable. This was said within earshot.

He was admitted to the hospital for 6 days and denied access to the support of his vital trained staff who know him well. The COVID-19 test was negative, he had a diagnosis of pneumonia, something he has experienced and recovered from many times. He received treatment. It was communicated that he had responded well.

Upon discharge, we were blindsided by the attending physicians’ recommendations: Return home on Hospice, discontinue nutrition, receive comfort measures only. When asked why? the hospital staff questioned this mans "quality of life". Hospital staff stated that they would want to avoid “continuing aggressive treatment measures”. As a team we challenged this, and he has made a full recovery.

What was different this time? staff were not present to advocate for him throughout his stay.

This man has fought for his right to be treated as every other Oregonian, has transitioned out of Fariview, and lives a dignified and fulfilled life. To have to fight so hard for the COVID test, to hear statements about giving the test being a “waste of valuable PPE” and to have the physician recommend at discharge to end his life, is absolutely appalling.

I ask that you support Senate Bill 1606.

Thank you.

Sarah Frazzini

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