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March 3, 2021

To: Sen. Patterson, Chair, Senate Committee on Health Care

From: Jennifer Santiago, President, Oregon Support Services Association
Katie Rose, Executive Director, Oregon Support Services Association

RE: Support for SB 567, declaring as unlawful practice the denial of treatment that is likely to benefit a patient based on that patient's disability

Chair Patterson and Members of the Committee:

The Oregon Support Services Association is comprised of the 14 Support Service Brokerages across Oregon. We serve nearly 8,000 adults with developmental disabilities living in their own or family homes in every community throughout the state.

All of us will at some point in our lives seek help from medical professionals to treat an illness or injury. When we do that, we trust the professionals we encounter will make recommendations that enable us to recover and thrive to the fullest extent possible. SB 567 seeks to assure this trust remains sacred by making sure that treatment decisions are safeguarded from the influence of personal biases or assumptions, including unintended biases.

Our healthcare system has been stressed over the past year as pandemic illness, treatment, transmission management, and now vaccination distribution have been heaped upon it. Unfortunately, Oregonians with IDD have a history of experiencing discrimination, coercion, and lack of access to healthcare, which has only worsened because of the pandemic. We believe that legal support and definition is needed to assure equitable and excellent medical treatment for all Oregonians.

SB 567 seeks to assure that information related to a host of factors, including disability status, cannot influence the following decisions:

- Denial of medical treatment to the patient that is likely to benefit the patient based on an individualized assessment of the patient using objective medical evidence, and
- Limitation or restriction in the allocation of medical resources to the patient.

SB 567 would also require that medical providers work with the patient, the patient's family, and others authorized to act on behalf of the patient in determining whether medical treatment is likely to benefit a patient. In times of fear and uncertainty, we all want our trusted advisors with us to sort through options and make the best decisions possible.

This legislative concept is not about faulting medical providers; it is about supporting humans in a system under stress to make good choices in difficult moments for all Oregonians.

We urge you to provide medical professionals with clarity and support to make the right choices for people in their care. Please pass SB 567, to ensure that all Oregonians can expect equitable treatment and high-quality healthcare.