

# NW DISABILITY SUPPORT

Advocacy | Education | Community

March 4, 2021

Dear Chair Patterson, Vice-Chair Knopp, and Members of the Senate Healthcare Committee:

Every Oregonian Deserves access to quality healthcare and life-sustaining supports without discrimination. Senate Bill 567 is important to our organization and the 3,800 families we support and the community we are a part of.

The covid 19 pandemic is a major challenge to all sectors of our community and we are all learning a lot about needs and inequities as we try to rapidly respond.

We are a long way from that equity and our lived experiences and our stories from our community reveal very deep problems that are literally life and death. When decisions are being made about the value of our loved ones lives they can lead to rationing of care and pressure based on a very medical lens on the worth of a life. This has happened in Oregon, [www.npr.org](http://www.npr.org) Oregon Hospitals Didn't have Shortages. So Why Were Disabled People Denied Care.

We know our loved ones as sons, daughters, friends, colleagues. We know what their communication means even if it's not in words or needs a device to be shared. We know people who are ventilator dependent 24/7 and enjoying their lives going on shopping trips, to movies, and more. We know people with Down Syndrome working and living in community and have studies that show the satisfaction that most people with Down syndrome feel about their lives which stands in stark contrast to the impression many doctors (but not all) hold about the value of those lives.

In crisis and when resources are scarce, we are fearful of doctors who with a medical lens can make judgements that are profound and discriminatory. We know from our own experience the other factor in the room with every appointment in a medical setting is the bias, stereotypes and subjective view of a health- care provider.

This bill would reduce the anxiety we carry beyond the shared fear we all have of the impact of Covid-19. It also allows for power to be shifted a little so that the person with a disability and those that know them well can better partner to create equity in their health care .

A crisis challenges us all and is also an opportunity to think again about how to serve all Oregonians health and wellness equitably. Our community need your action on this bill

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We are leaning into our mission with is; In pursuit of an inclusive civil society. We empower and support families and individuals whose lives have been touched by developmental disability. We work to increase education, promote public understanding and acceptance, advocate for full inclusion, and defend the civil rights of individuals with disabilities.

Our developmental disabilities community have been deeply and disproportionately impacted by Covid 19 pandemic and our community of course includes the BIPOC community & LGBTQ communities. Every Oregonian deserves access to health equity and the pandemic underlines this.

We are a partner with the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) and working to disseminate Covid 19 health information and outreach to the community. We also work with Latinx families in the disability community and see the compounding effects of adding language and cultural barriers to access and the urgent need to better address these issues

OHA stated mission: Oregon will have established a health system that creates health equity when all people can reach their full health potential and well-being and are not disadvantaged by their race, ethnicity, language, disability, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, social class, intersections among these communities or identities, or other socially determined circumstances. <https://www.shvs.org/oregon-health-authority-health-equity-case-study/>

We want action now, its not an academic discussion, it's an imperative that we need change based on the real events unfolding across Oregon now that are impacting the groups SB 657 seeks to support. Please vote yes and vote for ending discrimination.

Thank you for all your hard work and energies to meet needs on our communities.

Sincerely,

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