



House Committee on Health Care: Subcommittee on COVID-19

Testimony in Support of HB 2327

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March 10, 2021

AARP Oregon is pleased to testify in support of HB 2327 that establishes the Long-Term Care Emergency Preparedness and Response Team. AARP is the nation's largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to empowering Americans 50 and older to choose how they live as they age. With 503,000 members in Oregon, AARP works to strengthen communities and advocate for what matters most to families, with a focus on health security, financial stability and personal fulfillment.

Even though we are still in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is not too early to begin to improve how Oregon responds to future public health crises and states of emergency, especially when it comes to those residing in long-term care (LTC) facilities, representing Oregonians most vulnerable to COVID. HB 2327 makes improvements to how LTC facilities will respond to future emergencies, bringing key stakeholders together on behalf of supporting the unique challenges for those operating, working and, most importantly, residing in LTC facilities and their loved ones in Oregon.

We appreciate the collaborative approach of the proponents, the Oregon Health Care Association have had to our concerns, including the expansion of the Long-Term Care Emergency Preparedness and Response Team to include a consumer representative. Consumers bring a unique voice and provide a valuable perspective to discussions and decision-making.

HB 2327 requires long-term care providers to adopt emergency response plans, based on guidance and rules developed by DHS in collaboration with the Long-Term Care Emergency Preparedness and Response Team. Facilities must update these plans when there are new federal or state guidelines.

As we are *still* struggling with isolation and connectivity, we support any efforts to put technology into the hands of residents as well as the necessary support so they can remain connected to family, friends and external support systems. We hope through other legislative efforts, our state will continue to work to end the rural digital divide and the barriers to high-speed Internet in various parts of the state.

We look forward to seeing the next version of HB 2327 and appreciate the opportunity to provide our support to this overall effort.