

As a Food Service Manager for the last 15 years in a hospital setting, I strongly oppose HB2348.

Prohibiting bacon, deli meat and hotdogs in Oregon Hospitals is cruel and unnecessary. Government has no right to dictate and choose what a patient can and cannot eat. It is the responsibility of the medical staff to monitor and assign therapeutic diets and not the governments. Government lacks education and the circumstances of the individual patient. Nursing and staff throughout the hospital work with patients and are focused on the best care allowing them choice in their meals. Food is often the only thing that a patient can choose in the hospital.

Our goal is to make sure patients are eating and liberalize their diets as much as possible to allow them to obtain nutrients. We honor patients' rights to achieve that goal by offering vegan, vegetarian and kosher meals. New mom's, people recovering from illness or accidents as well as patients who are in end of life deserve to eat whatever comforts them. Often patients dying prefer to eat sweets and salty products because it brings them much needed comfort.

When a patient is in the hospital the goal is to help them make the right decisions and educate them to live a healthy lifestyle after they discharge. We want to teach them how to shop and eat in the real world. If a patient cannot afford to buy non-processed meats or the diet is too restrictive such as, eliminating bacon we will discourage patients trying. Eliminating foods from diets is not an effective method for a healthy lifestyle and leads to failure.

Bacon is a top seller in the hospital and Nursing and all staff deserve the right to eat what they would like during a stressful workday. We offer vegetarian protein products and often throw most of these items in the trash after service. Employees prefer bacon, sausage, and beef burgers. Deli sandwiches are a staple for the hospital they are easy for staff to eat and can be stored for later. Our sandwich station offers a large selection of vegetables and this allows staff to choose non-processed options. If we were to go to non-processed deli meat our costs would go up and we would contribute to an ongoing food waste issue. Un-processed products have a short shelf life and require additional labor to produce.

Deli sandwiches are also stocked in our nourishment rooms throughout the hospital and are given to patients during hours when kitchen is closed. The ER often uses sandwiches and rely on them being available. Patients that are not allowed silverware have sandwiches regularly.

This bill has good intentions but will increase food waste, food costs, labor costs, upset frontline workers and patients. Hospitals work hard to meet the needs of patients and all patients deserve the right to choose what they can eat. I find it frustrating that these bills are passed with little understanding of the individuals need or circumstance.