



**House Human Services Committee
Testimony in Support of HB 2394
Andrea Meyer, Director of Government Relations
February 8, 2021**

AARP is pleased to support HB 2394. 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.

The Covid-19 Pandemic has caused nursing homes to prohibit in person visitation to curb the infection rates and prevent further loss of life. Social interaction with family and friends is critical to the overall health and wellbeing of all long-term care residents. Residents and their families have been struggling during these months when in-person visitation in long-term care facilities has been prohibited. In addition to the social connectivity and emotional support visitation provides, visitors are key members of the resident's care team, performing essential hands-on tasks such as feeding, dressing and dental hygiene, and facilitating therapeutic activities that maintain or improve their loved one's cognition and mobility. In addition, family member visitors carefully monitor their loved one's health status and are often the first line of defense, identifying key issues of concern to facility staff.

HB 2394 is an important start in addressing the impacts of social isolation by having long-term care facilities create an isolation prevention plan. We urge the committee to consider how to expand these resources because the challenges of social isolation will not end when the pandemic finally does. We must continue to provide resources and tools to families and residents to address this critical need.

AARP supports the provision in HB 2394 that requires approval by the Department of Human Services of all isolation prevention plans. Due to the vital health impacts of preventing isolation, it is appropriate that the state ensure plans are sufficient to meet the needs of residents and their families. We recognize the plan to amend the bill and instead require it be part of each facility's emergency plan.

As these isolation prevention plans are developed, AARP believes that all residents and their families should be engaged by the facility in developing an *individualized* visitation plan that is reflective of their wishes and preferences, while adhering to all governmental guidelines. These plans should address visitation schedules, location of visits (indoor, outdoor, in-room, designated area, etc.) and responsibilities of all parties. These plans should be reviewed frequently and adjusted to meet changing circumstances and needs. Residents and their families may question or otherwise challenge the individualized visitation plan or any visitation restriction or determination, and they should be provided with Ombudsman assistance in doing so.

Additionally, it is essential that there be clear, regular information from LTC facilities to residents and their loved ones about how visits will be scheduled and facilitated. The state should require that this information be shared with the state LTC Ombudsman, residents, and families on an ongoing basis in the manner best likely to inform them (email, phone, flyers on meal trays, under doors, posting in common areas, etc.).

For these reasons, AARP urges passage of HB 2394.