

AARP Oregon, Alzheimer's Association and Providence urges a "YES" Vote on SB 199

AARP Oregon, Alzheimer's Association and Providence Health & Services are pleased to support SB 199, updating the Advance Directives laws in Oregon. AARP is the nation's largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to empowering Americans 50 and older to choose how they live as they age. AARP has over 503,000 members in Oregon and nearly 38 million nationwide. The Alzheimer's Association is the leading voluntary health organization in Alzheimer's care, support and research. Providence is Oregon's largest health care provider with eight hospitals, over 90 clinics and thousands of employees serving people all over the state.

SB 199 helps Oregonians plan their advanced care and create clear, comprehensive advance health care directives to be shared with providers and loved ones. When adults lack decision-making capacity or the ability to communicate their decisions, the duty to decide on treatment falls to others. Concern for the individual's wishes, values and welfare remains at the heart of surrogate decision-making.

Oregon has been a leader in adopting advance directives legislation and SB 199 builds on the work done in the 2018. HB 4135 (2018) brought together a diverse set of stakeholders including various health care and social supports providers, ethicists, attorneys, and consumers and their families (especially those who have been or are caregivers). Their work has culminated in SB 199, which contains a new Oregon Advance Directive for Health Care form. **Here are some important pieces:**

- **Provides clear language** allowing individuals to identify the care they do and do not want; gives individuals the chance to write specific wishes (kind of care, what matters most, spiritual or religious beliefs, other values and beliefs, preferred places to receive care and any other information they want to include).
- **Retains the Advisory Committee** through the Oregon Health Authority with a diverse stakeholder group, as required by law with regularly reporting requirements to the legislature.
- **Appointment Acceptance:** Requires the appointed health care representative (and an alternative) to accept appointment. This encourages dialogue with the patient and the representative.

As our society ages and more of us need and want to plan ahead, this update to Oregon's Advance Directives laws allows for a stronger engagement on these issues of when one lacks capacity to communicate. From a practical perspective, we know that having directives is vital and made more possible when they are easy to fill out and promote dialogue with loved ones, reducing the potential for family conflicts and legal problems.

For all these reasons our organizations urge a "YES" vote on SB 199