



February 7, 2022

Oregon State Legislature  
House Committee on Health Care  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, OR 97301

**Re: House Bill 4045 – Hospital-Based Violence Intervention Programs**

Chair Prusak, Vice Chair Hayden, Vice Chair Salinas, and members of the House Committee on Health Care:

On behalf of Oregon’s 62 community hospitals, their staff, and the communities they serve, the Oregon Association of Hospitals and Health Systems (OAHHS) supports House Bill 4045, which seeks to reduce injuries and prevent retaliation from community violence through hospital-based interventions with community violence prevention providers.

In 2021, the Government Accountability Office reported that initial gun injuries cost hospitals more than \$1 billion a year, with costs related to physician fees adding an additional 20% to that number.<sup>1</sup> The report notes that initial injury costs do not include readmissions, which affect up to 16% of survivors, or long-term care costs associated with the injury. The report also found that each year there were about 30,000 inpatient stays and about 50,000 emergency department visits to initially treat firearm injuries, and that patients with Medicaid and other public coverage accounted for over 60 percent of the costs of this care.

In Oregon, when examining the targeted demographic of these intervention programs of males ages 8 to 35 years old, there is a growing need in the Portland metro area and beyond. For this demographic, for all the Portland metro area hospitals in 2018 and in 2019 there were over 1,200 emergency department visits for assaults that could be categorized as intentional or penetrative, including assaults by gun discharge, sharp object, blunt object, or bodily force. When looking in regions beyond the Portland area, there were approximately 2,000 emergency department visits in 2018 and 2019 for this same demographic for assaults of this kind.

Hospitals play many roles in their communities, and to help address community violence, their role in this work will be as supportive partners with expertise delivered by trusted, community violence prevention providers trained in the unique skills necessary to affect change through intensive preventative or case management services. For participating communities, this collaboration will help protect victims of violence, hospital staff, and the broader community.

Given the growth in community violence, last year the Centers for Medicaid & Medicare declared community violence prevention a priority with a focus on the use of Medicaid in prevention programs. At this time, they indicated that for hospital-based intervention programs “CMS can work with states interested in designing violence prevention interventions to explore how best to

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-21-515.pdf>

incorporate Medicaid benefits into such programs.”<sup>2</sup> Additionally, President Biden announced last week a comprehensive approach to this issue with investments in evidence-based community violence interventions, specifically noting hospital-based intervention programs.<sup>3</sup> HB 4045 aligns with the nation-wide approach to reduce community violence in our communities.

Please join us in supporting House Bill 4045.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sean Kolmer', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Sean Kolmer  
Senior Vice President of Strategy & Policy  
Oregon Association of Hospitals and Health Systems

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.medicaid.gov/state-resource-center/downloads/allstatecall-20210427.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2022/02/03/president-biden-announces-more-actions-to-reduce-gun-crime-and-calls-on-congress-to-fund-community-policing-and-community-violence-intervention/>