



Legacy Health
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February 7, 2022

Representative Janelle Bynum, Chair
Members, House Committee on Judiciary
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Re: Legacy Supports HB 4142

Legacy Health is a nonprofit health care provider in the Portland-Vancouver area and mid-Willamette Valley with an integrated network of care providers from over 100 primary care, urgent care, and specialty care clinics, and seven community-based and nationally recognized hospitals.

Since 2015 Legacy Health has been advocating for legislation to protect hospital workers from reckless assault. Now you have a chance to make that protection reality. On behalf of the 14,000 people we employ, Legacy Health asks your support of HB 4142, which would make intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly assaulting a hospital worker a Class C felony. Oregon law, ORS 163.165, already includes professions who, like hospital staff, are required to serve all members of the public: emergency medical services (ambulance) personnel, youth correction facility staff, public transit vehicle operators, and taxi drivers.

Unfortunately, intentional violence against hospital workers by patients, their families, and other visitors is increasing at an alarming rate, despite our best efforts and extensive staff training to secure and defuse potentially violent situations. This is not just a Legacy Health problem, or a State of Oregon problem, but a disturbing national trend.

While hospitals have a legal and moral responsibility to care for all patients, regardless of the risk, it is also our duty to do all we can to protect the safety of our employees. Legacy has an extensive security plan for all our clinical units, including increased security staffing and an educational program to help staff identify potentially violent and aggressive situations, to prevent or de-escalate aggressive behavior, as well as self-defense methods.

HB 4142 does not remove any protections for mentally ill or impaired patients who may be violent but are not able to form criminal intent. It simply gives hospital staff in Oregon the same rights and protection of their counterparts in many other states, including Washington.

At Legacy Health, safety for our people and being the safest place to give and receive care is a top priority. For this reason, we urge you to support HB 4142.

Sincerely,

Kathryn Correia
President and Chief Executive Officer