



May 29, 2024

Senator Sara Gelser Blouin, Chair  
Senate Committee on Human Services  
Oregon State Capitol  
900 Court Street  
Salem OR 97301

Submitted via OLIS

Chair Gelser Blouin and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of O4AD, the Oregon Association of Area Agencies on Aging & Disabilities. We represent the 16 Area Agencies providing long term services and supports for older adults and people with disabilities in our state. Our Medicaid Area Agencies are administering Medicaid long term care services and supports for almost 60% of the state's Medicaid long term care caseload including case management, eligibility and adult protective services.

Thank you for accepting testimony in reference to the oversight and regulatory structure for Oregon's long term care facilities. Our Medicaid staff work with vulnerable consumers on a daily basis to help them secure the best available care setting as their needs demand. This is not an easy task at this time in Oregon. We see greater complexity in care needs, higher acuity level support needed in activities of daily living and the workforce challenges that are present in all aspects of long-term services and supports.

However, we must remember that safety has to be at the forefront of mind for our system of care. The Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman has delineated necessary proposals to improve the safety for residents of facilities including changes within the Oregon Department of Human Services, changes in the regulatory process for facilities and considerations for potential new facilities who are wishing to begin service. We support these recommendations and the upcoming conversation around how to improve safety in facilities in our state. There can be no delay in realigning our priorities as a state to identify consequential changes to keep our vulnerable citizens safe. Lives are at stake. We can and we must do better.

Meeting the needs of our older adults and people with disabilities in Oregon should prioritize independence, dignity, choice AND safety. O4AD looks forward to engaging in this conversation during the interim.

Thank you for your consideration.

Nicole Palmateer Hazelbaker  
O4AD