

Submitter: Drew Farmer
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care
Measure: SB1076

Good afternoon,

I am writing as an individual in support of SB 1076. As a city councilor and having worked in mental health in my region, I have seen the consequences of mental health patients being discharged with inadequate plans from local hospitals. The problems caused by this practice include persons repeatedly exposing themselves to dangerous situations, such as running in traffic, to acts of violence, as occurred in December of 2016 when a patient was discharged and entered a local business the same day threatening patrons with a knife.

In the course of my current work as the Executive Director for Oregon Coast Community Action, I have seen and helped implement alternative solutions to aimless discharges. Our agency has already coordinated with the largest hospital in our coverage area to ensure we receive a heads-up for the discharge of medically fragile veterans so that we can provide hotel vouchers. There are further opportunities, as I have understood it, through Coordinated Care Organizations to fund post-hospitalization services.

I am by no means saying that this is an easy task. Even with opportunities in place to fund improved services post-discharge, implementation of SB 1076 will cost hospitals money in the form of staff time to expand their process for creating discharge plans. This ask could also necessitate the expansion of hospital capacity or a change of design to allow for holding pending the completion of an improved discharge plan. But, in the interest of all Oregonians and basic human rights, this is a necessary bill to both ensure proper care for patients and to promote good order in our communities.

Thank you,

Drew Farmer
Coos Bay City Councilor
Executive Director, Oregon Coast Community Action