

Monday, February 12, 2024
Testimony in Support of HB 4129
House Committee on Early Childhood and Human Services
Chair Reynolds and Members of the Committee,

My name is Marcus Mueller, and I serve as a Lead Case Manager at the Southeast Branch of Multnomah County Aging, Disability, and Veterans Services. Today, I come to testify in support of the Homecare Modernization Act, HB 4129.

In my five years as a case manager I've encountered the struggles faced by both clients and caregivers due to the lack of adequate support. Just this past week, during two assessment visits, I witnessed the frustrations of caregivers who felt lost and unsupported in navigating the complexities of the current systems in place. The resources provided by the Oregon Home Care Commission (OHCC) are dated and disjointed and caregivers often don't get calls back when they reach out for help with basic things like payroll, background checks, and accessing benefits.

Case managers often find themselves over-extended with what we call a "shadow caseload" of homecare workers desperate for guidance and assistance. Despite our best efforts, many caregivers lack the necessary tools to navigate administrative tasks, leading to a reliance on case managers for support.

Moreover, when clients encounter issues with being the consumer employer representative, they turn to case managers for assistance, blurring the lines of our responsibilities. Clients often expect case managers to handle tasks such as interviewing, hiring, and terminating caregivers – despite it being the consumer employer's responsibility.

The consequences of inadequate homecare support are dire, with some clients experiencing costly hospitalizations. For our clients, the lack of stable caregiving options poses significant challenges. Many are left with no choice but to consider a nursing facility or community based care placement; despite their desire to remain at home – which is also the most cost effective option.

In conclusion, the Homecare Modernization Act represents a beacon of hope for clients and caregivers across our state. By addressing administrative barriers, supporting case managers, and bolstering our homecare workforce, HB 4129 offers a pathway to improved access to essential care services and enhanced quality of life for our aging adults and individuals with disabilities.

I urge you to support this crucial legislation – for the well-being and dignity of our communities depends on it.

Thank you for your attention.

Marcus Mueller, MPA
Lead - Case Manager 2
Multnomah County Aging, Disability & Veterans Services;
SE Branch - 1418