

February 12, 2024

My name is Dave Nichols and I live in Portland, Oregon. I am here to support HB 4139. I strongly endorse the benefits it would have for those like me who have severe traumatic brain injuries. It would help streamline the process for bringing more inpatient rehab to our state.

Some of you may know my story. Six years ago, I thought I had it made. I was out of school living up in the Puget Sound. I was working as a mechanical engineer on the design of Boeing's new 777x. But my life changed in an instant in a rock-climbing fall. I spent 5 weeks in the ICU up at Harborview, 3 of them in a coma. When my parents were told I was medically ready to be discharged, there was no specialized rehab facility in Washington or Oregon that would admit me. The only option in-state for me was a skilled nursing facility.

My parents determined that the closest available specialized rehab facility was Craig Hospital in Colorado. We all relocated there for the next 5 months. I have limited recollection of the early part of my stay as I was still coming out of my coma. The team of doctors and therapists at Craig who oversaw my recovery were amazing, and looking back it is amazing to see how far I came there.

Since we returned to Portland in 2018 we have connected with a lot of other families who took a similar course moving from a trauma center to an out-of-state hospital for Inpatient Rehab. Being so far away from family, friends and support systems was very difficult. The costs to relocate were very significant. For many this option would not even be possible. Without specialized inpatient rehab their loved ones have to settle for living with more long-term deficits.

The Certificate of Need process has been a real barrier in recent years for out-of-state rehab hospitals that want to come in and provide needed services here in Oregon. Our family really hopes that HB 4139 would help streamline the process in the future so that others with brain injuries can get the critical inpatient services they need. I sincerely hope you will pass the bill out of committee.

Sincerely,

Dave Nichols  
Portland, Oregon