



Feb. 4, 2026

Dear Members of the Senate Healthcare Committee:

The Oregon Gerontological Association (OGA) fully endorses SB 1570-1, *Healthcare Without Fear*.

OGA is a statewide membership organization representing professionals in the field of aging, including healthcare providers, caregivers, advocates, academics, and students. Our mission is to advance knowledge and collaboration across the aging sector, improving the lives of older Oregonians and those who support them.

Oregon hospitals are currently operating without clear, uniform, and enforceable statewide standards governing the presence of federal immigration enforcement. This lack of clarity has placed patients, caregivers, and healthcare workers at risk. Reports of ICE activity in and around emergency departments have disrupted care, pressured clinicians to override medical judgment, created confusion about hospital administrators' legal authority, and exposed workers to retaliation for informing patients of their rights. Protecting patients and supporting healthcare professionals is essential to public health, patient safety, and the effective functioning of Oregon's healthcare system.

Emergency departments most frequently serve two highly vulnerable populations: infants under age one and adults age 75 and older. Many older patients require the presence of a family member or personal caregiver to receive appropriate care. According to the Oregon Office of Economic Analysis, older Oregonians now outnumber children statewide. In addition, Oregon's caregiving workforce itself is aging: approximately 38.5% of home health aides and 33.5% of personal care aides are over the age of 55, and one in six direct care workers in Oregon is an immigrant. Disruptions to caregivers' ability to accompany or assist patients directly undermine access to care.*

It is urgent that Oregon establish and enforce clear standards that safeguard hospitals and medical clinics, protect patients and healthcare workers, and ensure uninterrupted, high-quality care without fear.

Hospitals exist to provide medical care—not to function as sites of immigration enforcement. Older adults and people with disabilities rely on trusted caregivers to access and navigate healthcare safely. SB 1570-1 creates accountability for all Oregon hospitals and will strengthen hospital operations, protect patients and staff, and uphold Oregon's commitment to healthcare access for all.

Sincerely,

Linda Bifano, DNP, MPA, RN
President, Oregon Gerontological Association

* Source: Ruggles, Steven, Sarah Flood, Ronald Goeken, Megan Schouweiler, and Matthew Sobek. 2022. *IPUMS USA: Version 12.0*. <https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V12.0>; analysis by PHI (September 2022).*