



LANE COUNTY

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RE: Support HB 4107

House Committee on Healthcare

Chair Nosse, Vice Chairs Diel and Nelson and members of the committee:

For the record my name is Eve Gray and I am the Director of Health & Human Services for Lane County. I am here today testifying in support of HB 4107.

In November 2023, Eugene lost its only emergency department (ED). Even before that time, EDs in our county were crowded, and ambulances experienced extensive delays at the hospitals. Since the closure, this body passed HB 4136, which was sponsored by Representative Nathanson, and implemented multiple pilot projects intended to divert patients from the ED. As we shared in our legislative report, many of these projects had significant success. Wait times in the EDs, however, continue to be long due to increasingly constrained access to healthcare of all types in Lane County, and this presents a risk to our community.

Representative Nathanson has been working with a group of stakeholders for several years to discuss ways to decompress our EDs. One thing the stakeholder group, which included local hospitals and CCOs, pointed out was that there are still many unnecessary ED visits for complaints that should be treated in a lower level of care. Our HB 4136 pilot projects focused on this group that was deemed not to require ED care. The pilots also illuminated, however, that not all urgent cares are alike or take the same types of patients, which has made it difficult to effectively divert patients from the ED as often as we had hoped.

Urgent care is supposed to be a place you go when you're sick and don't have to be treated in a hospital. Ideally, anything your doctors office can treat could be treated in an urgent care. Unfortunately, there is little consistency among urgent cares in terms of the services they provide. This leads community members, even informed community members like me, to lean toward the ED if they're not sure whether they can be treated in an urgent care.

Representative Nathanson has crafted a very thoughtful bill, taking into account many perspectives. Defining urgent care and requiring urgent cares to be transparent regarding whom they serve and what services they provide, will be a first step toward helping consumers, healthcare providers, and the local public health authority understand what is available at urgent care clinics. The bill would also require a basic level of care so that someone would know if they're going to an urgent care what they could expect to have available.

When you're sick, you don't want to go shopping around for medical care. Consumers deserve to have a common understanding around what an urgent care is and what it can do. This bill does not prevent walk in clinics, immediate cares, or other same day clinics from operating as they please, but it does create some common understanding of urgent cares and is an important step in helping consumers understand what care they can access outside of the ED.

ELECTRONICALLY SUBMITTED BY VANESSA CORNWALL, INTERGOVERNMENTAL
RELATIONS FOR LANE COUNTY