

Submitter: Whitney Donielson

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1030

Dear Senator Patterson and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in support of SB 1030 for several reasons that all have to do with my father's experience in assisted living. My father was fairly young and extremely healthy when he suffered an unexpected health episode that severely and permanently disabled him, and which he ultimately died from.

I support this bill for 3 main reasons:

1. Getting offsite is challenging for many residents: During the last 18 months of his life, my dad spent part of his time in an assisted living facility and during his time there, he had to leave the facility several times a week to go to offsite medical appointments, including getting vaccinations, because there was no onsite option. Every time he went anywhere, it was a several-hour process that always included:
 - a. Scheduling a ride on medical transport (and hoping they would show up on time, or at all);
 - b. having a private caregiver (who we hired) help him get to and from the appointments because his facility was so short staffed there was no one who could even help him get in and out of the medical transport vehicle;
 - c. Navigating pharmacies and vaccination spaces in these pharmacies that were not truly accessible for him in his wheelchair, thus resulting in him being shoved in whatever corner in the store he would fit in until it was his turn.
2. Protecting staff and residents from outbreaks: During the three short months he was in assisted living, there were two COVID outbreaks. None were reported to residents or their families. Residents with COVID were quarantined, but the staff, who were all unmasked (which was legal at the time), went in and out of patient rooms, including COVID patients, thus spreading the virus. He contracted COVID during one of the outbreaks, and it was very dangerous for him because of his fragile health. COVID aside, it would have been as equally dangerous for him and other residents to get the flu, pneumonia, or any other litany of vaccine-preventable illnesses.
3. My dad's legacy: My dad was a retired physician who served Lane County for his entire 30+ year career. After he retired, and before he became sick, he continued to volunteer in a variety of medical-related locations around Lane County, including vaccinating thousands of residents of the county against COVID-19 at vaccine clinics in 2021 and 2022. He believed strongly in medicine, science, and the importance of equitable access to medicine, and helped to organize vaccine clinics for specific

populations who were unable to easily get to the large public clinics. He also volunteered aboard, providing life-saving medical care in developing countries.

During my dad's stay in assisted living, we learned that most residential care facilities are first and foremost businesses, often owned by large national companies that care very little about anything besides the bottom line, at the expense of both their staff and their residents. They are not going to do anything without being legally compelled to. Please, vote yes on this bill and force these facilities that serve our most vulnerable populations to provide onsite vaccine clinics to their residents. Even one onsite clinic a year would have made a huge difference in my dad's life.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Whitney Donielson
Eugene, OR