

Written Testimony:

“**Medicine** is a social science and **politics** is nothing else **but medicine** on a **large scale**. Medicine as a social science, as the science of human beings, has an obligation to point out problems and to attempt their theoretical solutions; the politician, the practical anthropologist, must find the means for their actual solution.”

- Rudolf Virchow, 1848

For the record, my name is Rebecca Krop, I am from Eugene, Oregon, and I am testifying on behalf of Occupy Medical (OM) and Black Thistle Street Aid (BTSA) to represent our full endorsement of House Bill 2367.

Our organizations operate on the foundational belief that healthcare is a human right. On this point, I would like to be exceptionally clear - sleep is healthcare, proper nutrition is healthcare, sanitation and hygiene is healthcare, shelter is healthcare, and we believe that access to all of these basic needs are guaranteed human rights.

Today, our work is multi-fronted - from pandemic relief to street outreach, the obstacles to meeting people where they are at and providing them with care are numerous. However, the greatest obstacles that we encounter are a result of the sad reality of our current system’s failure to reflect these foundational beliefs.

This past week, BTSA shared over our instagram the news of our fourth unhoused patient’s passing (that we know of) in the last 9 months. They died of sepsis, after our physician found them trapped under a collapsed structure on a routine follow up visit. Medical care is not the answer. Medical care is the necessary action we take when our other systems of care have failed. We need massive public, social, and institutional change - a willingness from our politicians to finally address the systemic and structural oppression that keeps people dying in our streets, our parks, by our railroad tracks.

Our healthcare providers can and will continue to meet people where they are at. Whether this be at our Springfield clinic, or within the tents of those we’ve met who have asked for our aid in providing care. We can treat their symptoms, but the source is beyond our reach. We cannot treat harassment - reallocation of funds from police departments to public health initiatives can. We cannot cure sleep deprivation, but removing the constant threat of sweeps by city officials can. We cannot interrupt the trauma of a system that devalues and dehumanizes our most vulnerable community members simply because of their economic status, but you can.

HB 2367 is only the beginning of the long journey we have ahead of us towards making our communities livable for all, including our houseless neighbors.

We are doing our part. My ask of you today is that you do yours, and vote yes in support of House Bill 2367. Thank you