

February 4, 2024

I am a PROPONENT of Senate Bill 352

REMOTE testimony

Chairwoman Gossage and Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee Members:

Today, I want to highlight a crucial, often overlooked aspect of healing: the profound impact of loved ones at the bedside during illness. While the medical world focuses on treatments, surgeries, and medications, the role of emotional support provided by our family and friends plays an equally vital role in healing.

Scientific research has illuminated how the presence of loved ones can significantly enhance recovery outcomes. This is not just about the comfort of companionship; it's about the tangible, physiological benefits that love, support and physical touch can provide.

Emotional support reduces stress, sadness, loneliness, and helps create a positive outlook towards life and recovery. It triggers the release of hormones like oxytocin, endorphins, and serotonin, which act as natural painkillers, mood lifters, and promote overall well being. These biochemical responses have been linked to lower blood pressure, reduced risk of mental health conditions, and improved immune system function.

Having a loved one at the bedside during any type of out of home care offers assistance with activities of daily living (which, for nursing staff, is a HUGE help), plus, loved ones can advocate and share health information with medical staff and act as a safety net of care. This holds the immense potential to accelerate recovery, as well as empower and uplift our loved ones in their most vulnerable times.

I personally experienced what still feels like a nightmare with my grandmother who was hospitalized in January of 2022. It is a long painful story that led to her untimely death. My heart still aches often, over two years later, and I cannot stand the thought of anyone else going through what she did, nor the emotional trauma my family endured. Stories like mine are too numerous to count. No one should ever have to experience dehumanizing atrocities under the guise of healthcare. Moving on seemed impossible. It's only by God's supernatural love that I have been able to forgive.

So the question now becomes, what can be done to help prevent this from happening again?

As I look towards a future where healthcare continues to evolve, there should never be a situation when a hospital refuses to let a safe, healthy person in to visit their loved one. Their role is irreplaceable. It's a testament to the undeniable connection between love, support and our physical well-being. This is a call to action for all of us to ensure that love, care, and support remain at the heart of healing.

If you need empirical evidence, there are many studies and books to support this, though I think all you need to do is take time to reflect on your own humanity. What I believe we can all relate to is the power of love and hope. Physical touch, positive words, and loving support has an impact that can breathe life back into someone, sometimes more than the best medication ever could. When we know better, we can do better. Please, support SB 352.

Thank you,

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SENATE DISTRICT 3