



Disability  
Rights  
Oregon

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## Advocates warn if COVID-19 floods hospitals with sick patients, people with disabilities could be denied ventilators, intensive-care beds

*Group warns the lives of people with disabilities are on the line*

**Portland, Oregon**—Last night, the state’s leading statewide disability rights organization joined advocates across the country in calling for urgent action to prevent discrimination against people with disabilities in the rationing of scarce healthcare resources.

In a letter sent to Governor Kate Brown, Disability Rights Oregon urged her to immediately issue clear directives that all trainings should remind healthcare providers not to give priority to treating people who are younger and healthier and leave those who are older and with more health conditions—people with disabilities—to go without care or treatment.

Public health experts caution that in the days and weeks ahead, healthcare providers in Oregon, and across the country, may be forced to make extraordinarily difficult decisions about who receives scarce healthcare resources like ventilators and hospital beds.

**“People with disabilities are understandably worried. We have long had to fight back against attitudes about the inherent value of our lives in order to receive lifesaving care,”** said Jake Cornett, Executive Director, Disability Rights Oregon. **“Alarm bells are sounding in the disability community precisely because of how real the risk of discrimination is. Oregon should not wait for additional guidance from the federal government to remind providers of their obligations. Every one of us deserves to be protected from this public health threat.”**

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Disability Rights Oregon is the Protection and Advocacy System for Oregon

## Resources

- [Letter to Governor Kate Brown](#) (March 24, 2020)
- [Oregon Crisis Care Guidance](#) (Updated 2020)

## About Disability Rights Oregon

Disability Rights Oregon upholds the civil rights of people with disabilities to live, work, and engage in the community. The nonprofit works to transform systems, policies, and practices to give more people the opportunity to reach their full potential. For more than 40 years, the organization has served as Oregon's Protection & Advocacy system.

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