

Rafael Ramirez
Wenatchee, WA

January 26, 2017

Re: Support for Notice of Charity Care Availability
HB 1359 & SB 5231

Dear Washington State Legislature:

I am respectfully requesting your support for enacting HB 1359 and SB 5231 into law. This is important to me and many like me. I am 36 years of age, speak Spanish, and owe over \$50,000 of medical debt that I am unable to pay because of my low income.

In early 2016, I was driven to the hospital ER by my brother and sister-in-law because I had pains in my chest so bad that I could not talk. The doctor operated on my chest the next morning. He said I had an infection in my heart.

While I was in the hospital, recovering from my surgery, a staff person came to my room several times to ask me in English how I was going to pay. With the help of a family member to interpret, I told her each time that I did not know and she would leave the room upset. She never mentioned that I might apply for Charity Care.

After I was discharged from the hospital, one of my friends told me about a program for low income people. I asked the hospital staff for an application and they initially wouldn't give me one. I went back a second time and received an application in English. My brother and sister-in-law helped me understand it.

I never would have known to ask for a Charity Care application if my friend had not mentioned it to me. Hospitals should give Charity Care notice in both English and Spanish so people like me know they can apply, instead of relying on lucky conversations with a friend. Please support HB 1359 and SB 5231.

Thank you,

Rafael Ramirez
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