



School of Medicine
Psychiatry

Sleep Disorders Program

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Oregon House Committee on Health Care
February 10, 2015

Re: House Bill 2305

Chair Greenlick and members of the Committee,

OHSU supports House Bill 2305 to remove barriers in state licensure pathways for Polysomnographic Technologists. A pathway to allow for the hiring of experienced out-of-state sleep technologists who have the appropriate education and training certification is vital to ensure Oregonians have access to and receive the best care from qualified individuals at Oregon's sleep centers.

OHSU's Sleep Disorders Program employs 13 Polysomnographic Technologists and provides comprehensive evaluation and treatment of sleep disorders in adults, older adults and children. These technologists provide important services to our nearly 2,300 patients treated in OHSU's program each year. OHSU has had difficulty recruiting and employing qualified individuals since January of 2013 because of barriers created in Oregon for licensure of Polysomnographic Technologists. HB 2305 provides a necessary fix to allow OHSU and sleep centers throughout Oregon to hire the most qualified individuals while still providing appropriate and necessary parameters for licensure that will ensure only qualified individuals are practicing in Oregon.

Prior to January 2013 the OHSU Sleep Disorders Program was able to fill open positions within 30 days. It is currently taking between 3 and 6 months to find and recruit a new sleep tech, which has created long wait times for patients to receive care at our facilities. Prior to January 2013 the wait time for treatment at our program was between 3 and 6 weeks. Since January 2013, our average wait time is typically 10 to 12 weeks. OHSU has had a total of 9 Polysomnographic Technologist positions open since January 2013 ranging from relief to full time positions.

While we received 77 applicants for those positions, only 11 of those were considered to meet the current minimum threshold for qualification of licensure. 11 of those applicants were experienced Polysomnographic Technologists with experience ranging from 3 to 15 years; but current licensure requirements prevented them from being eligible for licensure in Oregon. On the other hand, there were 13 applicants who were Respiratory Therapists that would qualify under the current rules but did not have any training or work experience in sleep. These individuals are unable to perform a study without significant training and time but under the current rules

would qualify to perform this work.

We understand that the licensure rules were originally intended to protect patients and ensure quality of care, but in practice OHSU has seen these rules lead to a significant decrease the qualifications and quality of eligible applicants. Two of our most qualified and best technologists were hired prior to January 2013. Without HB 2305 we would be unable to hire them in the future.

The Board of Registered Polysomnographic Technologists (BRPT) and the Registered Polysomnographic Technologist (RPSGT) credential have been the national gold standard for sleep technologist credentials for 36 years and are an appropriate litmus test for ensuring Oregon sleep technologists have the necessary training and education to receive licensure in Oregon. HB2305 would allow OHSU to hire the most qualified and experienced sleep technologists to ensure access to high quality sleep services.

We strongly encourage your support of HB 2305 with amendments that make it clear that the Board must allow experienced polysomnographic technologists to obtain a license in Oregon if they have obtained and maintained the nationally recognized professional credential through one of the combinations of education and training recognized by the national credentialing organization.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions at 503-494-0154. Thank you for your consideration of this bill.

Sincerely,



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