

Joint committee on Ways and Means
Human Services Subcommittee
Co-chairs Alan Bates and Nancy Nathanson, and members of the Committee

May 18, 2015

I am writing in support of SB72 – Relating to fees for nursing license

I have been a nurse for over 30 years and have been engaged in teaching nursing at the Associate Degree level in a community college and more recently in a bachelor's program for nurses. I have also been an active member of the Oregon Consortium for Nursing Education (OCNE). Over a decade ago, nurses from all aspects of academia and practice came together to identify how to support the growing need for patient care in this state. Two approaches were determined as critical: improving the numbers of nurses educated as well as identifying the workforce needs for nursing in Oregon. As a result, OCNE was formed to focus on educating nurses and the Oregon Center for Nursing (OCN) was formed to support the profession with workforce information and focus on increasing the diversity of our nursing workforce in this state.

We know that there is more need for nursing care as our state population ages. In addition, there is increasing need to provide health care for newly insured through our Coordinated Care Organizations and to support citizen education for health promotion and illness prevention within our health care system. Nurses are primary providers of both health education and health promotion and illness prevention care for our state citizens in all age groups and in all health care settings – from acute care to community based care settings.

As our health care system evolves and moves into a more health promotion and illness prevention focus, nurses are primary providers of this care. Knowing that Oregon has resources to educate the number of nurses needed to support the care needs of our citizens is critical. In addition, having access to current and reliable workforce data from the OCN to make these health care resource decisions is also critical.

Based on these reasons, I strongly support the Oregon Center for Nursing and support SB72 as a way to provide ongoing stable funding for this important resource. The OCN has a critical purpose and supports the state's need to continue to develop and use nursing workforce information to promote health and wellness of our communities statewide. I urge the Human Services Subcommittee to support this bill and in doing so support the OCN, nursing profession and health care of all citizens in this state.

Again, I encourage your support for SB 72.

Renee' Menkens, RN, MS
967 Seagate Av.
Coos Bay, OR 97420

License – 0041389RN