



Marion County

OREGON

Board of Commissioners

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March 10, 2017

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Sam Brentano
Janet Carlson
Kevin Cameron

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

John Lattimer

Representative Jeff Reardon, Chair
House Committee on Higher Education and Workforce Development
Oregon State Capitol
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Marion County Supports HB 2540

Dear Chair Reardon and Committee Members:

The Marion County Board of Commissioners urges you to support HB 2540. This bill, if passed as written, will give community college boards the ability to request state approval from the Higher Education Coordinating Commission to award Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degrees under certain conditions.

The Marion County Health Department and Sheriff's Office have had difficulties in recruiting bachelors-prepared nurses in the public health and corrections fields. This is a trend seen in health and corrections fields throughout the state over the past decade and will become a more pressing concern as baby boomers retire from the workforce. HB 2540 will provide a cost-effective opportunity for persons seeking a nursing career to earn a bachelor's degree at their local community college in lieu of needing to relocate from their community of residence.

Chemeketa Community College is currently limited to awarding a two-year nursing degree that allows graduates to become licensed as registered nurses. Julie Huckestein, President and CEO, met with multiple organizations in Marion, Polk and Yamhill counties that employ registered nurses, along with community leaders who voiced their support of Chemeketa offering a BSN. A program in Salem will serve local students, employers and the regional workforce alike.

While the passage of HB 2540 is merely the first step in the process, it is a critical step. Besides the successful passage of HB 2540, additional requirements must also be met, such as the authorization from accrediting agencies and oversight from the Oregon State Board of Nursing, before a college could offer a BSN program.

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For the health, safety and future wellbeing of local communities throughout Oregon, the Marion County Board of Commissioners urges your support of HB 2540.

Sincerely,

MARION COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS



Samuel A. Brentano, Chair



Janet Carlson, Vice Chair



Kevin Cameron

cc: Marion County Legislative Delegation
Julie Huckestein, President/CEO, Chemeketa Community College