

February 21, 2017

Members of the Oregon Legislature:

I would like to offer my support for House Bill 2540. The bill, if passed as written, would 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. This would allow nurses with an associate's degree in Nursing another opportunity to gain their BSN.

The Institute of Medicine's report on the future of nursing recommended that 80 percent of nurses obtain their BSN by 2020. For many students, an associate degree is their access into the nursing profession. Approximately 50 percent of entry into practice nurses start with an associate degree. Workforce and community colleges are encouraging these nurses to continue on to get their BSN. It seems a benefit for students to be able to obtain their RN-BSN in their local community, and potentially at the community college where they began.

The ability for community colleges to award the RN-BSN degree may assist our communities and Oregon in addressing the shortage of bachelor's prepared nurses. We need to be ready to serve the aging population as our current workforce prepares for retirement.

For Dallas Retirement Village Health Center allowing the community college to offer an RN-BSN program would be beneficial because it would help to prepare RN degreed nurses for roles in leadership. These roles are in great demand in the field of geriatrics, especially with the changing of rules and regulations set forth by CMS/federal government. There is also a need for increasing education. As the worlds of healthcare continually change, the skills and knowledge set is increasing. If this degree could be obtained locally, at the community college, versus a university or done fully online, I feel this would only benefit the student and the community. The student is more apt to apply when they can go to the local community college which is cost efficient compared to the university to further their education. In turn, the student will possibly stay and work locally in their community. There is a goal to reach for BSN degreed RNs that will only benefit community, employers and profession to have community colleges offer BSN degrees.

I hope you will support House Bill 2540.

Sincerely,



Angela L. McCallum RN  
Director of Nursing  
Dallas Retirement Village Health Center