

March 9, 2017

Members of the Oregon Legislature:

On behalf of Santiam Hospital, in Stayton, Oregon, we offer our support for House Bill 2540. The bill, as you know as presented, 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.

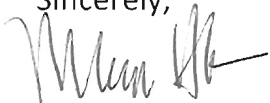
The ability for community colleges to award the RN-BSN degree may assist our communities and Oregon in addressing the shortage of bachelor's prepared nurses. We need to be ready to serve the aging population as our current workforce prepares for retirement.

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. We have been informed that approximately 50% of nurses enter into practice with an associate's 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.

For Santiam Hospital, allowing the community college to offer an RN-BSN program would be beneficial because we are committed to advancing the education of our nurses, whether in taking on leadership and/or managerial roles; or in expanding their skillset in other ways, it is valuable to access this at our local level. Specifically, for Santiam Hospital, the ability to complete a BSN program locally at Chemeketa Community College, where the majority of our nurses received their associates degrees to start would allow us to maintain our current workforce while advancing to the BSN level.

We hope you will join us in supporting House Bill 2540.

Sincerely,



Maggie Hudson, MBA, CFO/COO, Santiam Hospital