

Date: February 6, 2017

To: Members of the Oregon Legislature

RE: HB-2540

I am a part of Westcare Management, Inc., a company providing health care management service in Oregon since 1987, and sit on the board of directors for Veterans Care Centers of Oregon, a 501(c)(3) that operates the two State Veterans' Homes on behalf of the Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs. I have been in long-term-healthcare since 1980, have served on the boards of both the Oregon Health Care Association and the Washington Health Care Association, Chairing the latter in the mid-1980s. In addition, I have served on the Executive Committee of the National Association of State Veterans Homes, on the Board of the American Health Care Association, and Chaired the National Center for Assisted Living.

One thing that has been consistent throughout my nearly four decades in healthcare is the challenge of finding adequate staff to care for the residents I serve, and this is especially true for patient care/clinical staff at all levels. Nothing underscores this challenge more than the estimated 250-300 open positions for Registered Nurses (RNs) in Oregon alone. I personally see this shortage every time I review semi-monthly payroll reports that show that approximately 55% of the budgeted RN hours for the two Oregon Veterans Homes must be filled by Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs) in order to provide the care we wish to provide for the Veterans that we serve. Does this mean that we are providing inadequate care? No, it does not! But, it does mean that we are unable to provide the level of care that we wish to provide by going well above and beyond what is required by state and federal regulations.

If passed, signed into law, and implemented, HB-2540 would provide an additional source of Registered Nurses for not only the long-term-care profession, but for all levels of care, from hospital critical care units to physicians' offices. As a nation, it accomplishes little if we pass various "care acts", if those of us who are charged with providing that care cannot obtain the resources required to do so. Likewise, the care system gains nothing if additional regulations, with attending fines, are passed to ensure that high quality care is delivered, if the profession that is expected to provide that care cannot recruit caregivers.

I would respectfully request that the Oregon Legislature pass, and the Governor sign into law, HB-2540, giving our educational system one more arrow in their quiver to target the health care needs of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Oregonians.

Respectfully



Van F. Moore

Senior Vice President, Westcare Management, Inc.