



February 7, 2017

79th Oregon Legislative Assembly
900 Court Street, NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: House Bill 2540

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 nurses enter into practice 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 Willamette Valley Medical Center, allowing the community college to offer an RN-BSN program would be beneficial. We currently work closely with Chemeketa Community College and serve as a clinical site for their Associates in Nursing degree. By allowing the College to offer a BSN program it would make it easier for many of our current staff to move on to obtain their BSN which ultimately will give them a greater flexibility in terms of their career. Having a BSN program through Chemeketa Community College would open nursing educational opportunities up to many local residents. With a nursing shortage in full swing anything we can do to try and increase students would be extremely helpful to the healthcare system.

I hope you will support House Bill 2540.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Peter A. Hofstetter", is written over the word "Sincerely,".

Peter A. Hofstetter, CEO
Willamette Valley Medical Center