



*Experience* AT YOUR SIDE

February 10, 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 (ADN) 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.

Willamette Valley Hospice supports allowing the community college to offer an RN-BSN program. We often have our nurses who are seeking an RN-BSN program and I think it would be helpful to have the program available in the community where they live and work. We value having our RNs gain this additional education because it helps them to be better prepared for providing the independent level of professional practice required for effective hospice nursing care. I hope you will support House Bill 2540.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Pam Matthews'.

Pam Matthews RN BSN

Executive Director