



## **Testimony on the Oregon Health and Science University Budget HB 5024**

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Co-Chairs Monroe and Smith Warner and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments on the OHSU budget on behalf of the Oregon Nurses Association. ONA nurses and OHSU partner together to ensure Oregon has a robust and well prepared nursing workforce in all parts of the state and to care for our communities.

State funding for nursing programs at OHSU and in our community colleges is critical in order to ensure that we develop the nursing workforce to meet our future health care needs.

Also related to building the health care workforce that Oregon needs is the Scholars for a Healthy Oregon program that was first created and funded last legislative session. This program allows OHSU to waive the entire cost of tuition and fees for some qualified students. In exchange, these students commit to serve as a health care practitioner in a rural community once they graduate, for a certain amount of time. The program recognizes that students who come from rural communities are most likely to return to practice in these communities, and this program accepts students with a background in a rural area. It also serves as a recruitment tool for students from underserved rural areas.

The first class Scholars for a Healthy Oregon started their programs at OHSU in 2014. Of nearly 90 applicants, 21 earned full scholarships. This number includes 8 students currently enrolled in the Family Nurse Practitioner, Nurse Midwife, Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner, and Nurse Anesthetist programs. These future advanced practice nurses will be a critical part of Oregon's health care workforce and ONA supports continued funding for the Scholars for a Healthy Oregon program.

The OHSU School of Nursing provides the baccalaureate degree for the Oregon Consortium for Nursing Education through linkages with 9 nursing programs statewide. As our health care system continues to be reformed to incentivize primary and preventive care, there will be an increased need for larger numbers of nurses with baccalaureate and higher degrees. The Oregon Consortium for Nursing Education offers this through a progression through nursing education, which can begin at the community college level and conclude with an advanced degree.

A recent report from the Institute of Medicine on the Future of Nursing specifically calls for increased numbers of nurses prepared at the baccalaureate and graduate levels, and this program is poised to help efficiently accomplish this goal and help Oregon meet the nursing workforce needs of our future.

Additionally, the School of Nursing at OHSU is the only Oregon program to train Nurse Midwives, Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists, and Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioners. These groups of advanced practice nurses are already a key component of our health care workforce and will be in higher demand as more people gain health coverage.

ONA looks forward to working in continued partnership with the OHSU School of Nursing to address some of the critical issues facing our future workforce.

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