

OCN's Nurse Faculty Task Force

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TESTIMONY FOR THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTHCARE

In Support of Oregon's Nurse Faculty February 25, 2019

The Oregon Center for Nursing (OCN) is a state nursing workforce center, with a mission to identify the most pressing issues affecting the nursing workforce in Oregon. As part of its work, OCN has researched and tracked one of the most significant barriers to preparing nurses within the state: the lack of nurse faculty.

Recruiting and retaining nurse faculty has been a state-wide challenge for many years due to the high cost of graduate nursing education, and the low salaries nurse educators receive when compared to nurses working in other settings. According to a 2015 OCN study, as many as **two-thirds of Oregon's nurse educators had considered leaving their jobs, primarily because they were seeking higher pay, or a more manageable workload.** Additional research from OCN showed that from 2011 to 2014, more than one-half (51%) of nurse educators left their nurse educator positions.

In addition, many nurse faculty are leaving their positions due to retirement. **In the same 2015 OCN study, more than 50% of nurse educators said they intended to retire by 2025.**

After the release of the 2015 OCN report, the OCN convened a group of dedicated stakeholders to discuss solutions to Oregon's nurse faculty shortages. We've identified several potential ways to improve recruitment of new faculty and increase retention of existing faculty. Addressing wage disparities is at the top of the list.

Senate Bill 754 provides tax credits for nurse faculty in Oregon's rural communities, where finding faculty can be even more of a challenge due to the smaller pools of candidates. OCN's Nurse Faculty Task Force has identified tax credits as a tangible solution to help retain nurse faculty, and provide incentives for future recruitment.

While this bill will not provide relief for all of Oregon's nurse faculty, it will help alleviate the challenge of recruiting and retaining nurse faculty in areas that experience the largest challenges. This bill is an important first step to an overall plan to strengthen the nurse faculty workforce.

The Oregon Center for Nursing's Nurse Faculty Task Force urges you to support Senate Bill 754.