



## **Testimony in Response to House Bill 2945**

March 19, 2019

House Committee on Health Care

Deborah Riddick

Good afternoon Chair Salinas, Vice Chairs Nosse and Hayden and members of the committee. My name is Deborah Riddick. I am the Director of Government Relations for the Oregon Nurses Association (ONA). We represent 15,000 registered nurses throughout the state, as well as our member organization, the Nurse Practitioners of Oregon.

The ONA commends the sponsors of HB 2945 for their recognition that nurse staffing has had marginal and sporadic improvement since the passage of our last legislative fix in 2017. Nurses all across the state have concerns that the legislative intent, to provide appropriate staffing levels primarily via collaborative hospital staffing committees, requires additional work on the part of all interested stakeholders. Ongoing implementation has revealed several shortcomings which include, but are not limited to:

- many nurses are unfamiliar with the law and the protections afforded under it;
- most staffing committees are less than effective and produce staffing plans that are repeatedly rejected;
- inconsistency in staffing plan approvals and lack of oversight.

HB 2945's proposal would provide additional resources to enable OHA to better address some of the identified deficiencies. It is a step in the right direction. However, we believe that before additional members are added to existing committees, or fines are increased, that it would be in the interest of the patients we serve, and all the stakeholders, that our next step include thoughtful consideration of all the challenges under the current law. We believe that the best way forward must include a dialogue to better understand obstacles to implementation; identification of areas where rulemaking would provide appropriate remedy; and, if necessary, a legislative solution that has resulted from a deliberative process.

The ONA is a member-led organization and we welcome an opportunity to work with the sponsors and other stakeholders to ensure that amendments to the bill effectively address safe staffing and will reduce the need for legislative redress in future sessions. I appreciate having the opportunity to submit testimony.