

March 19, 2019

Re: House Bill 2945 – OAHHS Opposes

Chair Salinas and Members of the House Committee on Health Care:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 2945. On behalf of Oregon's 62 hospitals and health care systems, and the patients and communities they serve, we appreciate the opportunity to share with you our concerns with HB 2945.

HB 2945 seeks additional funding for the Oregon Health Authority to increase the number of surveyors and investigators who are responsible for hospital compliance of the nurse staffing law. Currently, the OHA is seeking to fill vacancies within this department for these roles. OAHHS would support increasing the number of OHA employees who are responsible for investigating nurse staffing complaints 1) if funds are available, 2) it does not conflict with other priorities and 3) the that the additional employees hired have hospital staffing experience or are familiar with the current staffing practices.

OAHHS understands the intent of increasing the number of CNAs on a nurse staffing committee and while, as currently drafted, this will not alter the balance between direct care and management on the committee we have overall concerns with changing legislation that is still being implemented. Implemented in the sense that not every hospital has been survey based on the changes to this law. In addition, OAHHS is concerned with expanding the role of CNAs on the staffing committee as doing so may put CNAs at odds with their own defined scope of practice under the Oregon State Board of Nursing.

OAHHS is opposed to increasing the penalty as there is no basis for why this needs to be increased. OHA has not imposed a penalty on a hospital for any violation. We have enclosed the civil penalty table created through rulemaking that is monitored by the state's Nurse Staffing Advisory Board. Legislation is not needed to modify the table regarding civil penalty assessments and recommendations of this nature should come from the governor appointed board.

We urge this committee to not move HB 2945 forward. We believe a strong approach to changing the nurse staffing law would be a collaborative dialogue with the various stakeholders including ONA, SEIU, OAHHS, Nurse Staffing Advisory Board and OHA to better understand the barriers of fulfilling the intent of the law.

Thank you for your consideration. Please let me know if you have any further questions.

Sincerely,



Andi Easton
Vice President Government Affairs
Oregon Association of Hospitals and Health Systems