



Testimony in Support of SB 823
March 20, 2019
Senate Committee on Health Care
Melinda Colón, RN

Chair Monnes Anderson, Vice- Chair Linthicum and Members of the Committee,

My name is Melinda Colón. I am a Registered Nurse on the Medical-Surgical unit at Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center in Corvallis. I am trained in many things, but my predominate goal is to provide safety and comfort to my patients. We see all walks of life and as direct care providers. we often don't know what circumstances we will be faced with each day.

Even on the inpatient units, it can still feel like the front line. I took care of an elderly man once who required medication adjustments for his altered mental status and advancing dementia. He was on a two-physician hold, meaning that if he tried to leave, we are to physically restrain him. Once, we had to physically restrain him, the individual caught onto a thought process and there was no way to de-escalate him. Our training allows for five people to accomplish a safe patient restraint; however, it took us a total of eight people, and ultimately three of us were injured in the process. All this happened in front of my other three patient's rooms, rooms that the staff on the unit worked hard to insulate from potential disruption or harm stemming from the incident.

Ultimately, what my colleagues and I didn't know was that this elderly patient was physically fit. He had military training and served previously for many years. This individual had also been involved in injurious events with staff at the prior facility he came from. This information was not initially known to my colleagues and I until we were asked "why did you get hurt?" in the aftermath of the incident.

As a health care provider, I should never have to go to work afraid and not knowing what I'm facing. SB 823, with the proposed forthcoming amendments, allows for our committees charged with overseeing workplace safety to have the backing needed to review the past and plan for future situations. Nurses and other health care staff need to be empowered to not only provide a safe environment for themselves to practice, but a safe environment for their patients to heal.

I urge your support of SB 823 and the proposed amendments.

Thank you,

Melinda Colón, RN