



Oregon Center for  
**N U R S I N G**

## Testimony to House Interim Committee on Healthcare Review of “The Future of Oregon’s Nursing Workforce” Report from HB 4003

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Chair Nosse, Vice Chair Hayden, and Vice-Chair Prusak, and members of the committee. Thank you so much for the opportunity to share with you about “The Future of Oregon’s Nursing Workforce: Analysis and Recommendations,” the report requested through HB 4003.

The Oregon Center for Nursing (OCN) was formed in 2002 by Oregon’s nursing leaders and in 2007 the Oregon State Legislature recognized OCN as a state advisor for nursing workforce issues. Our two decades of research on Oregon’s nursing workforce contributed to the depth of information provided in this report.

The “Future of Oregon’s Nursing Workforce” report was managed by the Health Care Workforce Committee who contracted with the University of California: San Francisco (UCSF) to conduct the study. UCSF sub-contracted with the OCN to provide local context and analysis.

From May to November 2022, OCN collaborated with the UCSF team to compile data about nurses practicing in Oregon, including nurse licensing requirements, employment settings where nurses practice, workforce diversity, nursing education options, patterns of nurse employment, and compensation of nurses. In addition, the researchers explored challenges facing Oregon’s nurse workforce, mainly the ongoing nurse shortages, unsustainable workloads, burnout, education capacity, and transition-to-practice for new graduates.

The report finds Oregon’s nursing workforce is stressed, like those in all other states right now. Employers report increased difficulty in hiring and retaining nurses, fueling burnout and higher workloads among remaining staff. Development of a future nurse workforce is also an area of concern with multiple issues impacting educational capacity and pressure to address a perpetual lack of diversity in the registered nursing workforce.

Specific recommendations center around:

- **Workforce Retention:** Address the mental and emotional well-being of nurses and create healthy work environments
- **Education Pipeline:** Develop clear pathways into the nursing profession to increase both the size and the diversity of the workforce

- **Education Capacity:** Increase the number of nurses who graduate from nursing programs in Oregon
- **Clinical Experiences for Students:** Explore new ways for students to obtain clinical experiences in nursing education
- **Certified Nursing Assistant Education and Scope of Practice:** Evaluate the CNA1 and CNA2 categories and assess training requirements for CNAs
- **Nurse Licensure Compact:** Consider participating with the National Nurse Licensure Compact to facilitate telemedicine delivery and support nurse workforce in Oregon communities that border Nurse Licensure Compact states
- **Nurse Staffing Regulations:** Evaluate Oregon’s current Nurse Staffing Law and potentially revise the statute to increase clarity and effectiveness, and consider alternatives, such as minimum staffing ratios
- **Local Solutions to Shortages:** Identify barriers and apply community-specific solutions, whether it be geographic (rural vs. urban) or work setting (acute care vs. long-term care) related
- **Anticipating Nurse Shortages:** Collaborate with appropriate organizations to predict fluctuations in the supply and demand of the nurse workforce

OCN has already embarked on work informed by these recommendations. Specifically, OCN has launched the **RN Well-Being Project**, a collaborative effort to improve the mental and emotional support of nurses in all settings where nurses practice. Also, with the support of a Future Ready Oregon Workforce Ready Grant, OCN will conduct a study on **“Barriers to Nurse Recruitment and Retention in Rural Communities”** to help identify local solutions to nurse shortages.

It has been our pleasure to work on this study to comprehensively document the challenges and opportunities facing Oregon’s nursing workforce. Implementing these recommendations will require the support of the legislature, regulatory agencies, educational institutions, employers and more to make the meaningful changes necessary to support the nursing workforce and lend stability to the healthcare system. OCN stands ready to assist in providing data, convening, and collaborating with our partners to keep this work moving forward.