

March 23, 2021

Dear Chair Prusak, members of the House Health Committee,

I am writing you today to request your support for HB 2464, which would create a commonsense solution to the shortage of certified surgical technologists in Oregon.

I am the Nurse Manager at River Road Surgery Center. Our ASC has been in the Salem area performing Ear, Nose and Throat surgeries for over 20 years. We have 23 employees currently.

My facility would benefit directly by having an apprenticeship program available for surgical technologists. There is a real shortage of available surgical technologist staff, and this will create a unique opportunity to create more jobs in rural Oregon. The current avenues for surgical technologist certification have not met the demands from the health care industry, and this working solution achieves the goal of maintaining adequate training and education for surgical technologists by obtaining certification.

I strongly believe that including NCCT as an accrediting body to the current surgical technology certifying bodies would enhance the workforce and quality of care to patients significantly. We have been impressed by Health STAR Initiative's proposed clinical programs and the outline on how potential surgical technologists can have on the ground experience in addition to matching clinical education currently required.

The Health STAR Initiative is committed to infection prevention, and the clinical program development committee is focused on ensuring safe protocols and processes are utilized to protect patient safety. Apprenticeship students will demonstrate basic competency and knowledge prior to being allowed to enter to operating room environment, and adequate supervision by an appropriate credentialed staff member will be required at all times.

Further, we have been impressed by the infection prevention continuing education that has already been made available by OASCA and the newly formed partnership with Health STAR Initiative. Next month, there is a webinar that covers Best Practices in Surgical Instrument Reprocessing, and a second session on Conducting a Moisture Assessment. This is taught by nationally recognized faculty and will provide an interactive opportunity for staff to learn more about infection prevention.

Thank you for your time and consideration to support HB 2464.

Sincerely,

Kelly Peterson, RN