

Greetings Chair Prusack, Vice-Chairs Salinas and Hayden, and members of the committee.

My name is Terri Kaiser, and I am a member of the Oregon Nurses Association. Today I submit to you, testimony in support of HB 3016. As one of ONA's 15,000 registered nurses, Nurse Practitioners of Oregon and professional member affiliates throughout the state, I am honored to be one of those Nurses and help represent our organization.

I support HB 3016. Our current COVID pandemic experience has brought to light an unforeseen flaw in the blanketed option for a health care facility to suspend the nurse staffing committee and its related staffing plans in times of emergency. The intention was good and it got us through, but it needs to be refined so that the professional opinions of nurses are not completely disregarded once a better insight into the problem can be achieved.

During the pandemic it became clear that our nursing workforce needed to adopt less than optimal standards in order to assess, stabilize, and address the needs of our patients, colleagues and employers. This short term strategy, while necessary, revealed a lack of preparedness and left nurses throughout the state without the ability to form contingency plans at a time when nursing expertise was most desperately needed.

This statutory amendment would center the needs of our patients by maintaining the collaborative solution based process of our hospital nurse staffing committees to address evolving conditions and maintain a cohesive work environment. It's a proactive approach to emergency preparedness that limits uncertainty and better prepares our health care system for future catastrophic events.

In my experience as the nurse co-chair of the OHSU-HMC Staffing Committee during the pandemic, I have found myself responding to many text messages from the nursing staff regarding patient assignments and managements lack of regard for following the guidelines of the surge staffing plan and thereby lowering the standard of patient care and safety.

I support HB 3016 and ask that you vote favorably to move the bill out of committee.

Sincerely,

Terri Kaiser RN
Nurse Co-chair of the staffing committee
OHSU-HMC