

Rep. Rachel Prusak  
Chair, House Committee on Health Care  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, OR 97301

RE: PeaceHealth Opposition to HB 3016

Chair Prusak and Members of the House Committee on Health Care,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input related to concerns I have with HB 3016. I am the Chief Nursing Officer at Sacred Heart Medical Center at RiverBend, which serves Lane County and surrounding counties as a regional referral center. I also serve as the Regional Chief Nursing Officer for the PeaceHealth Oregon Network overseeing all four Oregon hospitals. I ask that you oppose HB 3016 which would codify new administrative barriers and complexities during a state of emergency, like the COVID-19 pandemic.

The provisions proposed in HB 3016 are unnecessary as hospital nurse staffing committees may already meet at any given time that a committee Co-chair may request it, in addition to the required meeting once every three months. Since last spring, PeaceHealth has held ad-hoc nurse staffing committee meetings for COVID crisis staffing plans, as well as have COVID nurse staffing on every monthly Nurse Staffing Committee (NSC) agenda as a standing agenda item. We also meet bi-weekly with the Oregon Nurses Association to discuss any staffing concerns. Finally, the frontline nurse-chair of the NSC readily escalates any concerns to me or our nurse-leader chair of the NSC for us to review and address. Using shared governance and open and transparent communication, we have been able to successfully navigate this pandemic together with our nurse staffing committee in its current-state structure. The flexibility we have and communication with our nurse partners was a strong contributor to successfully managing one of the most dire periods in American health history.

The prescriptive nature of this bill is very worrisome. During a state of emergency, we need flexibility to get the job done and care for patients. As we respond to COVID-19, many regulations have been streamlined to reduce barriers to care and to assist in quickly addressing the immediate needs of our patients. Patient and caregiver safety are our top priorities and even during a crisis we operate under this philosophy. We need to be able to move quickly to ensure safety for all. HB 3016 would go in the opposite direction and set new regulations that will negatively impact our collective focus on patient care in an evolving crisis.

I ask that you oppose this approach which would add additional complexity while restricting flexibility, which ultimately will impact patient care and safety for all.

Sincerely,

*Heather Wall*

Chief Nursing Officer Sacred Heart Medical Center at RiverBend, Regional Chief  
Nursing Officer Oregon Network