

Oregon Wellness Program
A Program of The Foundation for Medical Excellence

Testimony in Support of HB 4003
House Committee on Health Care

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

I am Timothy Goldfarb, President of The Foundation for Medical Excellence (TFME). For those unfamiliar with the foundation, we are a not-for-profit foundation based in Oregon and established in 1984. Health care provider wellness was one of the key concerns that led to our formation. TFME has the reputation for bringing together individuals with different perspectives with the sole purpose of creating innovative solutions to problems common to healthcare professionals. In 2017, we were asked to develop a coalition of organizations interested in health care provider burnout. The Oregon Wellness Program was the result. In 2021, our mental health care team provided 634 counseling sessions to health care providers throughout Oregon, from Medford to Hood River, La Grande to Tillamook.

Today, the Oregon Wellness Program operates state-wide and provides confidential counseling to all Oregon licensed dentists, physician assistants, advanced practice nurses and physicians who reside and practice in our communities—a total of 25,000 licensees. The services are at no cost to the health care professional. A health care professional must self-refer. When called, we see the client within 3 days. We fund the program with support from the Oregon Medical Board and health systems from throughout our state.

You have heard testimony concerning the negative impact of the pandemic on our health care workforce. I am confident you have also heard these same concerns from your communities. The stress among our family members and friends in the health care workforce is not only the result of the pandemic. Our health care “industry” is complex with multiple competing interests that result in an environment confusing to patients and their families. Our nurses are key to patients and families successfully navigating through a system that was complex before the pandemic and will remain so afterward. As you’ve heard, our nurses need support, specifically access to mental health counseling.

HB4003 provides critical funding support so that our nurses will have access to the Oregon Wellness Program. We have the capacity—our mental health care provider team is experienced in treating nurses and enthusiastically support incorporating Oregon’s nurses. The Oregon Wellness Program respectfully supports HB4003 and the opportunity to partner with the Oregon Legislature in providing access to mental health services to Oregon’s nurses.

