

February 07, 2022

Oregon State Legislature
House Committee on Business and Labor
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

Re: House Bill 4106 – Surgical Technologist Apprenticeships

Chair Holvey and members of the House Committee on Business and Labor:

On behalf of Oregon’s 62 community hospitals and the patients they serve, the Oregon Association of Hospitals and Health Systems (OAHHS) strongly supports HB 4106, which will expand Oregon’s apprenticeship programs to include surgical technologists and will address some of the recruiting and retention challenges facing hospitals.

There is a critical shortage of surgical technologists across the state, and our current training and certification options are not enough to fill the pipeline with qualified people. In a January 2020 survey distributed by the Oregon Ambulatory and Surgical Care Association (OASCA) and Oregon Association of Hospitals and Health Systems (OAHHS), hospitals and ambulatory surgery centers noted that it is very difficult to fill openings for surgical technologist and have anywhere between 1 and 20 unfilled positions currently.

HB 4106 will create an apprenticeship option to train community members looking to enter the health care profession and care for their neighbors in our hospitals and outpatient surgery centers around the state. Apprentices in a surgical technologist program will learn on the job, be eligible for certification while earning a paycheck, which will make the occupation an option for individuals who may otherwise not be able to afford the college tuition required now. This option will be particularly impactful in rural Oregon and was identified as the type of innovative workforce solutions the state needs post-pandemic Oregon’s Workforce and Talent Development Board white paper on “Equitable Prosperity for All”¹.

Apprenticeship programs are valued for their focus on high quality on-the-job training and related instructional learning. Graduates in other occupations leave their programs ready to work, with hands-on experience and a certification that shows they were educated and trained to the same high standard. With Oregon’s population growing, the need to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, and an insufficient and maldistributed workforce, it is imperative that the state utilize all appropriate means to expand the health care workforce. OAHHS strongly supports HB 4106.

Thank you,



Katie Harris
Director of Rural Health & Federal Policy
Oregon Association of Hospitals and Health Systems

¹ <https://www.oregon.gov/workforceboard/data-and-reports/Documents/Equitable-Prosperity-Task-Force-Whitepaper-June-2021.pdf>