



February 21, 2022

Co-Chairs Steiner Hayward and Sanchez,

Mercy Flights Inc., based in Southern Oregon and the only non-profit air and ground ambulance company headquartered in Oregon, strongly supports OHSU's 30-30-30 project and encourages the funding request to support its goals.

As the leader of a medical transport company and health care provider in a rural area and as someone who has spent the majority of her career as an administrator for health care systems in multiple states, I can attest to not only the importance of a well-trained and well-maintained nursing workforce but also the concern all Oregonians should have of the current size of our nursing workforce in our state.

The pandemic challenged Oregonians in numerous ways, especially when it came to accessing health care services. It also exposed the weakness of some of our most important systems. I am proud to say that Oregon has some of the finest nurses in the country, but the reality is that we need more, and we will need to continue to grow that specific workforce for years to come as we try to keep up with the greater medical needs of our communities. Nurses are at the heart of our healthcare system. An increase in opportunities for people to pursue nursing and a continued commitment to funding a well-trained nurse workforce has a direct impact on ambulance and EMS providers like Mercy Flights.

Mercy Flights relies heavily on our flight nurses to provide outstanding care. These nurses are chosen from the best group of available nurses possible, given the unique nature of their responsibilities. Furthermore, as our organization continues to broaden the scope of our mobile integrated health care services, we will seek nurses to complement our advanced trained paramedics to provide health care within patients' homes which improves access to affordable healthcare, especially to our most vulnerable populations. Finally, our own paramedics often strive to enter the nursing profession and are dependent on a well-funded and supported nursing program to do so. Supporting a nursing workforce that supports our organization and our community makes sense for Mercy Flights, and it is my hope that all Oregonians can see the impact that a strong nursing workforce can have on all of us.

Please support OHSU's funding request and continue to support its efforts to train such a vital piece of our healthcare system.

Sincerely,

Sheila Clough - CEO
Mercy Flights Inc