

Nicole
Bend, OR

February 20, 2023

RE: HB 2697 (Nurse Staffing)

My name is Nicole and I am a nurse at St. Charles Medical Center, Bend.

Every day I come to work; we are understaffed.

I work as a charge nurse on my unit and feel like I'm constantly being pressured by management to put my nurses into unsafe assignments. For months now, all the acute care units have not received their required breaks or lunches. As an example, during one pay period, I worked six shifts and was only able to clock out for one thirty-minute lunch that entire time. On almost every shift, we have to ask 2-3 RNs to stay over to help out the day shift (or else day shift RNs are starting off in high acuity, unsafe assignments.) These nurses now work 14–16-hour nights, also without breaks or lunches, resulting in fatigue and putting patients at risk. The truth is, a lot of nurses feel forced, or guilty, into these unsafe assignments and only do it to help promote patient safety and safe staffing.

So many nurses are stressed and experiencing symptoms of PTSD (myself included). Many are actively looking for other jobs or are looking for a pay cut/schedule change just to ensure their mental health. Over the last few months multiple nurses have opted in favor of safe staffing assignments in non-acute care settings instead of unsafe assignments with covered breaks and lunch.

Ultimately, our unit has seen an increase in falls, bedsores, infections, and length of stay – all of which is directly related to these unsafe staffing conditions.

Our patients, our communities, and our nurses deserve better. Pass HB 2697.

Your voter,

Nicole