

Submitter: Christina Becker

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

Measure: HB2697

Christina Becker
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RE: My personal testimony in support of HB 2697

To the House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care p

My name is Christina Becker and I am a night shift nurse at Providence Newberg Medical Center working in the Medical/Surgical unit.

I could begin this narrative by writing down story after story and page after page of what nurses go through in a typical shift. But instead, I am simply coming before this committee and asking that you trust the professionals that are living the realities of staffing and staffing shortages every single day. When we are down just one nurse on night shift, those that are left take a deep breath because we know that we're in for a whirlwind night. Normal staffing for my unit on night shift would be four to five patients to one nurse. We go up to six patients when we are short-staffed. When we are short-staffed and the patient-to-nurse ratio goes to 6:1, you feel like you're just trying to come up for air most of the night. Yet this is our normal, what we deal with every single time we go to work.

And now we're being told by the administration that there are new staffing models coming our way that would increase the patient-to-nurse ratio even more than what it already is. Increase?! During a time when nurses are burning out leaving the field, we're being told that our ratios will increase?! Night shift nurses going to 7 patients? This is just simply ludicrous and unacceptable. It is totally unsafe and will absolutely lead to poor patient outcomes. There is so much research already done showing that decreased patient/nurse ratios lead to better and safer patient outcomes. It is absurd for hospitals to even consider ways of making higher patient-to-nurse ratios work.

It is well known that safe staffing ratios are directly correlated with fewer medical errors. No one would want their loved one being cared for by a nurse who barely has time to see them. When nurses are stretched thin and overworked is when the opportunity for mistakes to be made grows astronomically. Profits should NEVER come before patients. Nurses are nurses because they care about people. Please

help us maintain the integrity of the nursing environment by supporting HB 2697 and keeping patient-to-nurse ratios safe! I find it interesting to note that Oregon continues to graduate new nursing students at record numbers, but these new nurses don't have the desire to work in the conditions that the hospitals are requiring. I would suggest that the problem is NOT that we don't have enough nurses, but rather we don't have enough nurses who are willing to work in these conditions.

Please, help nurses and our patients by passing HB 2697 and give nurses what they really need, a manageable workload that will bring nurses back to the hospital environment.

Sincerely yours,

Christina Becker, BSN, RN