

Submitter: Keith Moree
On Behalf Of: OFNHP
Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care
Measure: HB2697

Hello, my name is Keith Moree, I'm a certified and licensed speech-language-pathologist, also known as a "speech and swallowing therapist," and I've worked for almost 25 years at a large hospital just outside Portland.

Thank you for having us here today.

As much as we love nurses and appreciate the work that they do, we must make sure that we also guarantee adequate staffing for the allied health professionals who work side by side with nurses. We must make sure that when we guarantee improved staffing ratios for nurses, hospitals aren't allowed to cut back on other key personnel in order to do so.

You might not know this, but the speech and swallowing therapist is a key component of the hospital care team.

In hospitals, when speech therapy is not adequately staffed:

- patients with difficult illnesses such as Parkinson's disease, or muscular dystrophy, may wait longer than necessary to have their swallowing evaluated, and to be able to take oral medications safely;

When speech therapy is not adequately staffed:

- the patient who has had a serious stroke, or a traumatic brain injury, may not be able to communicate their basic needs;

When speech therapy is not adequately staffed:

- the patient who underwent head and neck surgery may be delayed in using their voice again.

When care is delayed due to understaffing of therapists, stress levels rise for everyone, including nurses, patients, and their families.

Please make sure that speech therapists and other rehab professionals are adequately staffed in hospitals, by law, along with nurses. Please help us ensure the staffing we need to take great care of the patients in Oregon hospitals. Thank you for your time and attention.

Keith Moree, MS, CCC-SLP

Proud member of Oregon Federation of Nurses & Health Professionals