

Kristin Gosney, RN, BSN, BMTCN
3181 SW Sam Jackson Park Rd
Portland, OR 97239

February 25, 2023

RE: Testimony in Support of HB 2697

To the House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care:

My name is Kristin and I am an RN at Oregon Health and Science University. I work on the outpatient Oncology/Hematology & Bone Marrow Transplant Unit, as well as the Early Phase Clinical Trial Unit.

The pandemic has been extremely frustrating for nurses, as organizations across the state of Oregon have deemed nurses "heroes", but have continually denied our desperate pleas for help. We are constantly overworked and understaffed and instead of hiring more nurses to alleviate the problem, management "rewards" us with pizza parties.

We don't want pizza parties and we don't care about being touted as "heroes". We want safe staffing, both for the safety of our patients and for our own safety and mental health.

Nurses are exhausted and burned out and exhausted nurses make mistakes. Patients should not be harmed because organizations are paying the C suite or prioritizing profits to shareholders instead of hiring more desperately needed staff. It is critical that we have safe staffing ratios.

Patients are not the only ones at risk. Nurses are dying by suicide because we cannot take the mental toll that these many years have burdened us with.

Our nurses and our communities deserve better.

Please support HB 2697 and give nurses what they really need: help.

Units across the state are chronically understaffed and nurses are often being asked to take on more than they should safely handle. Nurses are dealing with extremely ill patients and giving medications which can often be lethal if given incorrectly. If we had better staffing, we wouldn't need to take on such an insane workload and we wouldn't be as rushed. We would be able to take our time in the many life altering decisions we are constantly making.

The pandemic has only magnified the already existing staffing shortage in Oregon and nurses are burning out quicker than ever. Most nurses are often unable to take breaks and are therefore running on fumes. Staff turnover is high and many nurses are opting to change jobs to be able to work from home or leave the nursing profession entirely because our units are just too taxing on the mind and body.

HB 2697 seeks to address many of the root causes of this crisis including requiring minimum safe nurse staffing and enforcement of legally required rest and meal breaks. The problem in Oregon is not that we don't have enough nurses. The problem is we don't have enough nurses

who are willing to work in these conditions. Please, help nurses and our patients by passing HB 2697.

Thank you.

Kristin Gosney