

Ting Yang

February 26, 2023

RE: Testimony in Support of HB 2697

To the House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care

My name is Ting Yang and I worked as a nurse on a medicine acute care inpatient unit at OHSU during the COVID-19 pandemic. Bariatric patients with complicated medical conditions are often seen on the unit, and often they require total care, which means the patients cannot provide self care and requires nursing staff to provide hygiene, repositioning, elimination care, and sometimes 1 on 1 feeding. During the pandemic, the nursing staffs were always short, when I work on the night shift, there was often only have 1 CNA for up to 34 patients. Imagine the situation when a nurse has 1-2 total care patients who are 300lbs-600lbs, that requires 3 staff to turn the patient to clean after elimination, reposition every 2 hours and that was impossible to have 3 staff in the room to help. It would be lucky if I could get 1 person to help in the room. With repetitive pulling, pushing, and turning, my back started hurting, and later on, my range of motion was also limited I couldn't put my pants on in the morning and sometimes I even couldn't perform self care after using the toilet. I was scared. I filed the work injury and started looking for treatment, I had to wait for 3 weeks to see my family NP and she told me that her clinic doesn't take worker's comp, so I contacted my workplace occupational health, and they refused to see me and suggested me to try the OSHU primary care clinic, I called them and I was told that no physicians are taking new patient until a year later. So I went to the urgent care, and I was referred to a PT and X-ray. I tried to contact the SAIF insurance a few times to ask to see an attending physician to examine me and I was told that they will work on it, and a few months later, I received an IME letter asking me to see a Neurosurgeon SAIF pointed. During the few months of PT, chiropractic, massage, and acupuncture therapy. I was able to bend to put my pants on and do some house works, but still had lift and bend restrictions from the doctor. The Neurosurgeon performed a brief head-to-toe assessment and provide SAIF with a statement that my work activities will not cause my back injury and that I don't have an injury, and SAIF declined my work injury claim and I had to pay for all my medical expenses. I was shocked to know their decision and I felt disappointed about how SAIF and the Neurosurgeon treated a healthcare worker who cares about her patients so much but end with a back injury at a young age. I didn't know what to do since it was my first time experiencing it; I contacted the risk management office and asked for advice, and I found a lawyer and requested for hearing. My lawyer told me that SAIF shouldn't point the neurosurgeon to me and suggested I find another experienced physician attending to re-exam, since the nurse practitioner, physical therapist, and chiropractor's statement and treatment notes will not win over the neurosurgeon's (How sad?!) My lawyer offered me a list of physicians that I can go visit, and I made an appointment with one that is close to me. After the meeting and examination, the physician confirmed my back injury and offered me a statement to support my claim. The day before the hearing, SAIF's lawyer wants to offer me a settlement and hope to postpone the hearing, after the talk with my lawyer, I agreed with their suggestion because I see it as an apology, but no one contact me for a month and I felt disrespected and SAIF was not showing any sincerity. So I contact my lawyer to reschedule the hearing if SAIF is not responding in a week. My second hearing was scheduled for a few months later, and before the hearing day, SAIF reach out again and ask to offer me \$22,000 and will pay within 2 weeks. I don't trust them anymore and request to see them in court. A couple of hours later, my lawyer called me that SAIF will accept my work injury claim and we didn't need to go to court

and I win! I was excited to finally have justice but also disappointed with the instance company and the unethical practices in the medical system. Worker's compensation supposes to help injured hard workers, not try to track the workers and insult them. Medical professionals, who work for SAIF and provide an untrue statement to harm the patient to make more money, don't their hearts feel heavy at end of the day?

I am a nurse, a healthcare professional, yet still have difficulties navigating the insurance and healthcare systems, what about people who don't know much about healthcare systems? How difficult for them?

I am now still receiving treatment for my back pain, and I had to change to a lower physical-demand job. If there was a safe staffing plan, I wouldn't get an injury from caring for my patients, and one should experience what I have experienced just because they care.

Sincerely,

Ting Yang