

Submitter: Maggie Guay

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

Measure: HB2697

Maggie Guay
1414 S. Birch Ct.
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February 26, 2023

RE: Testimony in Support of HB 2697

To the House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care,

My name is Maggie Guay and I'm a Registered Nurse at Oregon Health & Science University on the Solid Oregon Transplant, Urology and Reconstructive Plastic Surgery Unit. I have spent seven years of, by far, the best career on this unit.

While we are being called heroes during the pandemic, we are also being flat out ignored. We need help. We are pleading for help to be able to deliver the quality care that your family member deserves. We need more staff. We have been asking for over a decade, but throw a pandemic into the mix and it's now a literal staffing crisis. There needs to be change. We are begging. HB 2697 addresses the root causes of the staffing crisis including requiring minimum safe staffing and making sure we can literally eat. Meals and breaks are legally required, and the way that it is now, we are not guaranteed them that day when we step foot on the unit for our shift. Most places cannot close or pause work to have a lunch break, we depend on having staff in order to do so.

We have held hands of dying patients wearing full isolation gear while juggling the increasing workload of health care, and we have risked our lives and our health to care for the vulnerable. I was 34 weeks pregnant running down the hallway to respond to an emergency, on a night that we were down 2 nurses which was 33% of our requested staff.

Our patients depend on us to receive the quality care that they deserve. Patients come through the doors of OHSU, vulnerable, scared & during, often times, the most difficult part of their lives.

Patient ratios = less medical errors and increased quality care. We are stretched thin when forced to take on more than what is safe and that can lead to medical errors and burnout

OHSU is one of the most profitable hospitals in Oregon, so they should not be putting profits over patients. Or, in other words, money over someone's loved one.

Staffing should never have anything to do with money, rather quality care and, bottom line, safety. It is not safe to be stretched thin. It's not safe for us, neither is it for our patients.

Healthcare demands have increased over the years and even more so now with COVID. There are so many shifts that we are down nurses. Although it was this way prior to the pandemic, it has exponentially gotten worse. It has become the "normal" to be short staffed. We regularly don't get our required meals and breaks. I often times cannot step off the unit, uninterrupted and eat lunch. There are some shifts, I count going to the bathroom as a break. It should not be that way. That is causing so much burnout, and without nurses, there is no hospital.

Would you want to be receiving medical care or treatment if those who were caring for you were stretched thin, not listened to by someone calling them a "hero," and going on hour 15 because they had no one to replace them? That is the reality of what happens at OHSU.

Please listen. Our patients are our world. We joined the most rewarding career there is, to take care of people who desperately need it, cannot care for themselves, and are in the most vulnerable position. We are asking this because our patients are worth more than profit.

We need more staff. We need HB 2697 to pass.

Sincerely,
Maggie