

Submitter: Jessica Dalton  
On Behalf Of: ONA  
Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care  
Measure: HB2697

Jessica Dalton  
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RE: Testimony in Support of HB 2697

To the House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care,

My name is Jessica Dalton and I am a nurse at Oregon Health and Science University in the Emergency General Surgery Unit.

Across Oregon and across the U.S. nurses are being asked to take on more shifts, more roles, and more acute patients. Moreover, we are being asked to do this while experiencing staffing shortages on an almost daily basis.

The nurse is the first and last line of care for every patient in the hospital. When the hospital is short CNAs, nurses provide complete care for their full patient load. When our food service is short staffed we order meals and assist with tray delivery. When our phlebotomy or vascular access services are short staffed, we draw labs and place IVs. When there are no ICU beds available, we care for ICU level patients on a Medical-Surgical floor with a full patient assignment. When other floors are short staffed or the Emergency Department is beyond capacity we float to other units, some very different than our specialty area, or act as helping hands in the Emergency Department, ICU, or Pediatric units.

We step up again and again by taking on extra shifts, extra responsibilities, and extra patients. We adapt time and time again to crisis contingency plans, policy changes, and environmental restructuring brought on by an unprecedented increase in patients requiring hospital level care. We do all this while working every day to keep our patients safe and advance their care.

We can not continue to do this successfully while caring for increased patients loads

of higher and higher acuity patients. We are seeing an increase in hospital acquired infections, falls, and other patient safety indicators. I believe that the strain and staffing shortages of the last several years contributes directly to this. Safe staffing ratios is critical to nursing care.

Please, help nurses and our patients by passing HB 2697.

With urgency,  
Jessica Dalton MSN, RN, CMSRN