

Submitter: Lisa Schwartz

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

Measure: HB2697

My name is Lisa Schwarz and I am an RN on 11k at OHSU

When I first transferred to OHSU from another hospital, I found the grass to be so much greener than my previous employer. I loved that OHSU had so many resources and an impressive system of operations that organized and supported the flow and workload that RNs face on a daily basis.

Since the pandemic, our workload has increased exponentially. I have watched so many and I mean, SO MANY nurses leave the bedside due to burnout. We are compassionate about the work we do but without adequate staff and resources we are constantly stretched thin. Being asked to do more each day we show up to work leaves us with constant dread and anxiety. There are days where we absorb the weight of short staffing so much that we are unable to give our patients the bare minimum.

I came into this field to go above and beyond to help patients on their hardest days, but instead am being asked to do more, with less- leaving me with little time or energy to give my patients the care they deserve. I am met everyday with the uphill battle of staffing issues-causing unsafe ratios and having to constantly do the work of other teams of all other ancillary staff that are short also.

When I talk with family and friends that don't work in healthcare, they cannot even fathom that it's normal for nurses to work a 12 hour shift without getting breaks. In the last two years, I can count on one hand how many times I have been able to take all of my breaks, uninterrupted without worrying about the safety of my patients while I am away.

We need safe staffing, for the health and safety of our patients/fellow Oregonians but also for the mental health and retention of our nurses.

Lisa Schwarz