

Submitter: Alisa Sheth

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

Measure: HB2697

Dear Committee Members, I am writing in support of HB2697 which would support Oregon nurses in providing safe and effective care to patients by supporting adequate staffing, breaks for staff, and processes to hold hospitals accountable for meeting the care needs of our communities. As an occupational therapist with 20 years of experience, I have seen firsthand how nurses are essential for the operations of hospital services and if staffing is not adequate it creates unsafe and untenable situations for patients and providers. Without nursing work, little care and healing can actually happen in these settings. The current pressures put upon nurses to provide quality care under impossible conditions are not sustainable and Oregon nurses are leaving the work regularly due to terrible working conditions. With the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic and future health emergencies, Oregon is leaving its communities without essential healthcare services by not safeguarding staffing ratios and conditions that allow nurses to do their jobs to the best of their abilities. OHA must hold hospitals and other healthcare institutions accountable regarding staffing ratios, provision of breaks, and other mandates that protect nurses and patients. Staffing shortages which can lead to care rationing disproportionately impact people with disabilities and other historically marginalized communities. All Oregonians deserve quality care and nurses deserve working conditions that are not harmful. HB2697 provides important enforcement and accountability measures in place to work towards a more healthy and sustainable future for the state's healthcare systems.