

February 6, 2023

Senate Higher Education Committee
Oregon State Capitol

To Chair Dembrow and Members of the Senate Higher Education Committee:

I am writing in full support of SB523 concerning the Bachelor of Science in Nursing.

In 2019, SB3 gave community colleges the ability to offer applied baccalaureate (BAS) degrees if authorized by the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC). However, if colleges are to offer a bachelor-level component in nursing, further legislation is needed in order to call the nursing degree a BSN, which is the industry and regulator-recognized title, rather than a BAS-N, which is not recognized by employers and nursing boards.

- A community college option for earning a BSN degree would increase access to four-year nursing degrees across Oregon and particularly in rural areas.
- A student with a BSN has more opportunities for promotion and higher pay.
- Many community college RN graduates are paying more expensive out-of-state, online providers to attain a BSN. Local community college alternatives would provide a lower-cost option.
- At Chemeketa Community College, 100 out of 175 nursing graduates over the last five years did not go on to earn a BSN. If community colleges were able to offer the BSN, it would provide a valuable local option to RN graduates who are not pursuing the BSN to continue their education with familiar faculty, learning environments, student supports and - critically - a more affordable career pathway than currently exists.
- An RN-to-BSN program from a community college will provide the opportunity for more equitable outcomes for underserved, often marginalized populations, as education from community colleges is a more accessible, affordable option.
- An RN-to-BSN program offered locally will allow students from smaller communities to pursue their degree without taking on the increased financial and social burden of commuting. Chemeketa and Linn Benton Community College nursing students come to Santiam Hospital & Clinics for clinical rotations. Santiam Hospital & Clinics would be able to provide more clinical rotations to help students pursue their BSN. Across the nation, we are all struggling with RN shortages. There are plenty of applicants, just not enough programs and instructors to meet the demand. Our goal should be to create the opportunity to open up the supply and not provide barriers to that goal.

I urge you to sign on to SB523 and support higher level skills in a critical field.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Maggie Hudson, MBA
President & CEO

Maggie Hudson, MBA · President & CEO