



Legacy Health  
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March 2, 2023

Senate Committee on Education  
Oregon State Capitol  
Salem, Oregon

RE: SB 523

Chair Dembrow and Members of the Senate Committee on Education:

Legacy Health supports SB 523 with the forthcoming amendment that would require community college Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree programs be accredited. As a health system that requires new graduate nurses have a BSN from an accredited program this amendment is critical.

Community Colleges offering an accredited BSN degree will open another pathway for increasing Oregon's nurse workforce. For many students, an associate degree is their access into the nursing profession. Employers and community colleges are encouraging these nurses to continue their education to obtain a BSN. These students will benefit if they are able to obtain their BSN in their local community, and potentially at the community college where they began their education.

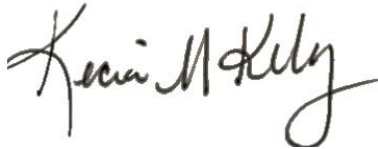
There is a growing body of evidence that shows that BSN graduates bring unique skills to their work as nursing clinicians and play a key role in the delivery of safe patient care. We believe that a BSN education better prepares our nurse graduates to meet the demands required in today's healthcare settings. BSN nurses are recognized for their ability to practice across a wide variety of inpatient and outpatient settings and demonstrate strong skills in critical thinking, leadership, and health promotion.

A BSN program in the community college setting would offer local nurse graduates another option for continuing their education as well as provide hospitals with an increased number of local BSN graduates. Today, without this option, they are likely to seek their BSN degree from schools outside their local area. This leads to difficulties recruiting BSN prepared nurses in some communities as they are likely to seek employment where they are trained.

Legacy Health is a nonprofit health care provider in the Portland-Vancouver area and mid-Willamette Valley with an integrated network of care providers in over one hundred primary care, urgent care and specialty care clinics, and six community-based and nationally recognized.

If community colleges can offer an accredited BSN program, we would have a better chance of recruiting locally prepared BSN graduates and retaining them. Legacy urges support of SB 523 with an amendment that requires the programs be accredited.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kecia M. Kelly". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "K" and "C".

Kecia M. Kelly, DNP, RN  
Senior Vice President and Chief Nursing Officer