

Good afternoon Chairman Nosse, Representative Nelson and members of the House Committee on Behavioral Health and Healthcare.

My name is Sherri Steele, and I am the Chief Nursing Officer of Santiam Hospital in Stayton Oregon.

In order to meet the requirements of the mandatory staffing ratios at **“all times”**, will require all of the hospitals to hire more RNs to function as resource/break RNs. We are all already short staffed before the proposal of this bill. What would be the plan to create more RNs to meet the requirements of this bill? There is opposition to block us from becoming a compact state. The nursing schools are turning away qualified applicants because they do not have enough nursing instructors. Hospitals are struggling to provide clinical rotations for the students, and the expense of contract labor is not sustainable.

Hospitals have no control over how many staff call out whether sick or personal reasons. We have no control of the volumes of patients coming to our emergency departments. We can't turn them away simply because our staffing ratios will be off. If we take them, then it could cause a staffing variance, and then the hospitals will be fined and/or sued in civil court. We have no control over the fact that the nursing homes won't take patients because they don't have staffing. The hospitals have spent the past 3 years holding those patients, taking up acute care beds and staff.

This bill was proposed based on the collateral effects of a worldwide pandemic that none of us had any control over. Labor costs are sky high, energy, food, supplies, equipment, all increasing, while insurance reimbursement is decreasing. Now Hospitals will be fined for taking patients surging into our emergency departments. This bill as written will put the hospitals in an **impossible situation**. If you think, the voices are loud now, wait til the public finds out about how their access to care will be affected when Hospitals have to figure out how to cover all of this, still take care of patients, and keep the hospitals from going under.

I ask you to seriously consider the downward effects of this bill. We have many things to fix in healthcare, but not like this. This is too drastic of a move at this time.

Thank-you for providing the opportunity to share my views in **opposition** of HB 2697.