



March 16, 2023

Oregon State Legislature  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, OR 97301

*Delivered electronically via OLIS*

Chair Nosse and Members of the House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care:

The Oregon Association of Hospitals and Health Systems (OAHHS) is a mission-driven, nonprofit association representing Oregon's 62 community hospitals. Together, hospitals are the sixth largest private employer statewide, employing more than 70,000 employees. Committed to fostering a stronger, safer Oregon with equitable access to quality health care, OAHHS provides services to Oregon's community hospitals ensuring all are able to deliver dependable, comprehensive health care to their communities; educates government officials and the public on the state's health landscape; and works collaboratively with policymakers, community organizations, and the health care community to build consensus on and advance health care policy benefiting the state's 4 million residents.

Hospitals are more than just buildings; they are cornerstones within the communities they serve. Our hospitals are employers, partners in community projects, and community spaces—all while providing vital health services to generation after generation of families in communities across Oregon. We know that when our hospitals are strong, our communities win.

We support House Bill 2665 with the forthcoming amendment. We appreciate the collaborative partnership with long-term care providers in crafting a bill that will strengthen the continuum of care and increase transparency and accountability around temporary staffing while protecting against unintended consequences for patients.

The high cost of temporary agency staff has been a key contributor to the hospital financial strain that emerged during the pandemic and continues today as hospitals face ongoing workforce shortages. While regulating the rates that temporary staffing agencies can charge may help alleviate some of this strain, such regulation should be balanced against the concern that the rate caps may prevent hospitals and other health care providers from securing the staff needed to maintain patient access to care. The forthcoming amendment to HB 2665 will include provisions that are important for hospitals to continue to serve their communities. The amendment will also appropriately allow temporary staffing agency rate caps to be waived under certain circumstances, such as during emergencies. These waivers will be able to be obtained and renewed quickly, further ensuring that hospitals and other providers can be responsive to the needs of their patients and communities in the face of staffing challenges.

We look forward to working with other stakeholders and the Oregon Health Authority in a comprehensive rulemaking process to establish maximum rates for temporary agency staff. Thank you for the opportunity to engage on behalf of our members and the communities they serve.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andi Easton". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "A" and "E".

Andi Easton  
Vice President of Government Affairs  
Oregon Association of Hospitals and Health Systems