



March 22, 2023

Good morning Co-chairs Valderrama, Campos and members of the Joint Subcommittee On Human Services,

My name is David Lynch, I am the President of AFSCME Local 3295, the Oregon State Hospital Nurses. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today to highlight some of the working conditions we're working under at the Oregon State Hospital.

Last week, our superintendent presented to this committee about the functions of the hospital and its overall goals. Our patients need support so that they can successfully reintegrate back into their communities.

This support comes from a team of individuals who help care for the person as a whole and have built relationships with them. As someone who has worked at the Hospital for years, I can share first-hand about the challenges we face at work due to being short-staffed.

Prior to the staffing crisis differentials unprecedented numbers of employees a week were being forced against their will to work additional hours as mandatory overtime. For example our members who show up at 12:30 PM on a Saturday for a 10 hour shift, need to anticipate being mandated until 7 AM Sunday.



Then after staying until 7 in the morning, you may be required to be back at work Sunday afternoon, and may get mandated again until 7 AM Monday morning. Mentally, physically, emotionally you have to prepare yourself and your family.

To help retain folks working, we've been working under an Letter Of Agreement since 2021 and is set to expire at the end of this month. This LOA has provided a higher wages to keep staff stable during the pandemic and increased Aid & Assist population.

My co-workers have said directly to me that they would not continue working if it wasn't for the differential pay. Investing in staffing for retention AND being creative around recruitment is the only way we can be adequately equipped to support our patients.

We all want to work and know that the work we do is unique but also believe we should be compensated adequately. The Hospital has also hired travel nurses that cost the state about \$100 more than what our state nurses make, so if we're already spending the money, why not invest in our own workforce?

We need a long term solution so that the Hospital can use its facilities to its full potential and help as many people as it can, but we can't do that if we're not staffed adequately. Our staff is consistently getting recruited by other agencies yet many have remained because they are committed to helping our patients get better.



We want to do the work so let us help the individuals who need it the most by directing OHA to dedicate more resources to recruitment and retention of staff.

Thank you for your time today, if you have any questions please reach out to the AFSCME team