

Chester Novitt

Oregon State Legislature Testimony Form

**Agenda: SB523 Create New Nursing Education Opportunities –
Community College Bachelor of Nursing (BSN) Programs**

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of expanding community college nursing instruction by offering full Bachelor of Nursing BSN programs. The current nursing course is typically a program culminating in a two-year ADN degree, a nurse with an associate-level education. Students aspiring to higher education beyond an associate degree would need to ensure their associate program has articulation agreements with other bachelor's programs, allowing their community college credits to count toward a higher degree.

A more cost-effective option would be to pursue a BSN at the community college level. According to the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN), Employment of New Nurse Graduates and Employer Preferences for Baccalaureate-Prepared Nurses, respondents from 461 nursing schools indicated that 79.6% of employers strongly preferred nurses with a BSN. In addition, almost half (45.1%) of hospitals and other healthcare settings insist that new hires have a BSN. And in many states where community colleges can offer the RN to BSN program, increases in nurses with advanced degrees are evident.

Another compelling argument is that community college-led BSN programs would effectively meet student needs where they live and work. Younger nursing students might opt for a four-year program. However, working nurses often have families, full-time jobs, and other commitments that decrease their available time, funds, and flexibility to fit in classes, clinicals, and study groups. Community colleges offering BSN programs could potentially minimize these challenges while increasing the diversity of the nursing workforce.

As a potential nursing shortage looms due to attrition and aging out, more nurses feel the pressure and the desire for a BSN degree. Community colleges nationwide are beginning to offer RN to BSN programs that help nurses fit the degree program into their working schedule. The introduction of BSN programs at the community college level would also enhance the acceptance rate into competitive nursing programs, thus alleviating the backlog of applicants waiting to gain acceptance into four-year programs and helping fill the anticipated decline in nursing staff.

Thank you for your time and for reviewing my statement in support of expanding educational opportunities in nursing to include BSN programs. Please feel free to contact me should you want to discuss the presented insights.

Sincerely,



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