

My name is Julie Bucher, and I am the Owner and Program Director of Caregiver Training Institute, one of the largest training centers in Oregon for Nursing Assistants and Medication Aides. I was dismayed when I was informed by the OSBN that if bill OR SB 703 passes we will be required to have Nursing Assistant certification testing through the NCSBN, and I was encouraged to submit testimony during the public hearing.

I was shocked to learn that there was no intention of a state contracting agency to provide public notice of an invitation to bid to foster competition among prospective bidders for certification testing and was only considering awarding a new contract to one source.

The State of Oregon has utilized D&S Diversified Technologies / Headmaster for a number of years. They have provided quality, innovative, customized certification testing. Stakeholders, consisting of volunteers from healthcare vocational training centers, long-term care facilities, hospitals, and nursing professionals are selected to participate in multiple taskforces for job analysis surveys, best practices recommendations, and review and creation of exam questions. They hold skills training workshops for faculty, provide training videos, mock practice tests, sample diet cards and fluid recording sheets, etc. D&S Diversified Technologies / Headmaster has been very proactive and transparent, even allowing us to set standards and choose our cut score here in Oregon.

D&S Diversified Technologies / Headmaster has a 4-star rating and provides Nursing Assistant certification testing in 19 states. Credentia administers the NNAAP exam on behalf of NCSBN. Credentia has a 1-star rating and provides Nursing Assistant certification testing in 17 states. Apparently, the one reason given to support a change, which to all appearances is a downgrade in quality, is that Credentia offers the written or oral portion of the exam in both English and Spanish.

However, the OSBN does not consider English as a second language a disability. The Nursing Assistant English language literacy requirement for enrollment in the Nursing Assistant training program is that all students must be able to read, comprehend, speak, and write in English at the sixth-grade level or above.

Oregon census demographics for 2022 indicate over 83% of the population speak primarily English in the home. About 9.8% of the population is foreign born and 15.3% of the population speaks a language other than English at home. In Oregon, there are 123 languages spoken in the home, with Spanish and Russian being the second and third most spoken languages in the home behind English. The most common languages spoken in the Portland Metro area in descending order are English, Spanish, Russian, Chinese, Vietnamese, Tagalog, Ukrainian, German, Korean, French, and Arabic. So, my question is this, what about other languages?

Our OSBN Survey student statistics over the last three years indicate that English is the primary language for over 80% of our students. The number of our English language learners average 12%. Of our average class ELL student population, 14% are of African descent, 13% are Asian descent, and 12% are Hispanic or Latino descent.

Please understand, I am not against having students get needed assistance and materials to help them learn program materials during training. We take great pride in our content, delivery methods, and the training we provide. But certification testing is the end result, not the answer to improving pass rates. In addition, the change of providers will potentially not only reduce the quality of testing and be more costly without an effective return, but will also most likely reduce the number of testing sites available, causing certification delays, based on the testing site criteria of the NCSBN.

Our testing here in Oregon is at risk with this proposed change. It must be stopped.

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