



To: House Committee on General Government, Emergency Management and Veterans

From: Rosaleen Kosydar

Date: 2/4/2024

Subject: Support for Public Safety Workforce Stabilization Act of 2024

Dear Chair Grayber, Vice Chair Lewis, Vice Chair Tran, and members of the committee,

My name is Rosaleen Kosydar and I am writing in support of HB 4045 Public Safety Workforce Stabilization to retain and recruit workers at the Oregon State Hospital.

I am a dental assistant at Oregon State Hospital. My job is to assist the dentist both at the Salem Campus and on a dental van at the Junction City campus. Both campuses require being badged in through Sally Ports - which check my ID for entry or exit or for movement within the facilities.

The dental clinic at Salem is a full dental clinic-four treatment operatories, a lab, sterilization room and staff workstations. The dental clinic is one of the highest risk areas in the secured perimeter-because dental treatment requires a wide range of instrumentation and uses sharp instruments-EVERYTHING is kept behind locked cabinets and during and after use require accountability for safety to all staff and patients.

I am constantly aware of my positioning during the presence of a patient in my chair-remembering my one wrong movement or lack of awareness could be a perfect opportunity for the patient to act out and threaten my safety or the safety of others or themselves. Performing dental care in a psychiatric hospital, to

patients that are mentally unstable has been one of the most stressful and difficult jobs I've worked. The OSH dental clinic is absolutely nothing like the dental office you or I go to for our dental care.

Prior to working at OSH, I worked at a general dentist office for almost 10 years. When the dentist would have a patient that posed a threat to himself or staff, 911 was called and that patient may be arrested, or escorted off the site and would be immediately dismissed from the practice. At OSH, the entire patient count is a high risk to staff safety. I have been chairside with some of the most violent patients and no restraints allowed for my protection. One patient had to be escorted by 2 security transport and 2 unit staff and still this patient with a history of assaulting staff came with no restraints and became violent and delivered a strong blow to the dentist's cheek & nose and knocked him off his stool!

Plus, I provide dental services on the dental van at Junction City- for almost 7 years I have worked these clinics and patients that required restraints would come on the van in restraints-yes, it lessened the potential harm that could happen from those individuals, but this limited space presents all staff to be on extreme alert. On both campuses, I am fully aware of why patients are in the facilities, and I do not try to place myself or others at risk by not constantly being aware of my surroundings and how I perform my duties in the dental clinics.

Sharing just a brief overview of my role in the hospital, especially in the dental clinic, I believe HB 4045 would improve the recruitment & retention of staff. Since I was hired in 2016, the dental clinic has hired and lost 6 assistants with several taking better paying jobs in safer environments. When the dental assistant position has posted, it has taken months to recruit applicants, and many, after interviewing and learning of the secured perimeter, the high-risk work environment, wage for position, and other factors, most decline to move forward with being hired.

I strongly feel that all OSH staff that have direct contact with patients should be recognized with improved retirement benefits. The demands that are placed on those providing quality care to patients with severe mental illness within the hospitals comes at a high cost to our own personal wellbeing because some patients have been violently assaulted and will never regain their lost health-

some traumatized beyond any amount of monetary compensation. Let OSH workers know their services are greatly appreciated by improving the retirement benefits.

I ask members of the committee to fully support HB-4045. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Rosaleen Kosydar CDA, EFDA, EFODA

Oregon State Hospital