



March 18, 2025

To: Senate Health Care Committee

Fr: Matt Swanson, SEIU Oregon State Council

Re: Testimony in Support of Senate Bills 27 and 283

Chair Patterson, Vice-Chair Hayden, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Matt Swanson, and I am here today on behalf of the members of SEIU to express strong support for Senate Bills 27 and 283. These bills represent a critical investment in Oregon’s health care workforce—one that will help stabilize our care infrastructure, address workforce shortages, and ensure quality care for all Oregonians.

The Workforce Crisis

Across Oregon, hospitals, long-term care facilities, and community health centers are struggling to recruit and retain health care workers. Chronic understaffing has led to burnout, high turnover, and diminished access to essential services. That is why a hospitals, long term care and primary care have joined with labor organizations to present these priority investments to support workforce in our industry. We know that:

- Oregon will need 224,000 health care and social service workers by 2033 to meet demand.
- Eight replacement openings exist for every new job added in health care.
- 55% of health care jobs require postsecondary training—higher than most other industries.

Without urgent action, we risk further destabilizing our care system and leaving patients without the care they need.

Senate Bill 27: Investing in Recruitment & Retention

SB 27 makes key appropriations to expand workforce pipelines and strengthen training programs across care settings. These investments include:

- \$20 million for the Essential Worker Health Care Trust to retain workers in long-term care.
- \$2.5 million for the CareWorks Training Partnership to support long-term care worker training.
- \$2.5 million for the Education Fund Hospital Training Partnership to enhance apprenticeship and on-the-job training for medical technicians, certified nursing assistants, and phlebotomists.
- \$15 million in clinical education reimbursements for hospitals to support training capacity.
- \$10 million in clinical education reimbursements for long-term care providers to expand hands-on training opportunities.

- \$9.5 million to support workforce development, recruitment, and retention at Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs).

These investments will create stronger pathways into health care careers while improving job quality and retention for workers already in the field.

Senate Bill 283: Maintaining Strong and Improving Workforce Policy

SB 283 provides the policy framework necessary to implement these investments effectively. It directs the Oregon Health Authority to:

- Provide reimbursements for hospitals, long-term care facilities, and FQHCs that offer clinical training opportunities. Clarifying the provider types and purpose of reimbursements.
- Provide direction to OHA to **“The Oregon Health Authority may seek any necessary approval from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to receive federal financial participation in the costs of the reimbursements provided under ORS 676.476 and 676.479.”** The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services have previously approved matching funding for many of these provisions, this gives OHA the continuing ability to assess the viability of matching and prepare applications to draw down matching funds.
- Convene a workgroup to evaluate the Essential Worker Health Program and Trust, ensuring long-term sustainability, affordability, and quality of care.

By coupling these strategic policy changes with the funding in SB 27, Oregon can build a workforce development system that is both sustainable and responsive to the evolving needs of the health care industry.

Investing in our health care workforce is an investment in Oregon’s future. SB 27 and SB 283 are the product of collaboration between labor, hospitals, long-term care providers, and community health leaders—all of whom recognize the urgency of this crisis and the need for targeted solutions.

I urge your support for Senate Bills 27 and 283 to ensure that Oregon has the workforce necessary to meet the growing demand for health care. Thank you for your time and consideration, and I am happy to answer any questions.

Sincerely,

Matt Swanson
Political Strategist
SEIU Oregon State Council