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David A. Cauble
President & CEO

Chair Nosse and Members of the Committee,

For the record, our names are Mathew Sikes, RN and Christie Wiles, RN. We are registered nurses at Sky Lakes Medical Center and serve as Direct Care RN and Management Co-Chairs of our hospital's Nurse Staffing Committee. We are here to express our support for the -1 amendment to House Bill 4074.

Like nurses across Oregon, we strongly support safe staffing and the intent behind Oregon's hospital staffing law. At Sky Lakes, that responsibility is not taken lightly. Our Nurse Staffing Committee meets regularly, reviews staffing data, evaluates patient acuity, and works through concerns raised by bedside nurses. We advocate for our patients and collaborate with hospital leadership and union partners to ensure care is delivered safely and professionally.

The -1 amendment recognizes that rural hospitals operate under unique and often challenging conditions that require thoughtful flexibility. This is not about weakening staffing standards. It is about making them workable in communities like ours.

Sky Lakes is the sole community hospital serving a vast rural region of southern Oregon and northern California. Our patients are older, more medically complex, and frequently present with advanced illnesses. We face ongoing workforce shortages, seasonal census fluctuations, severe winter weather, and limited access to agency or temporary staff. These are not abstract concerns. They are daily realities that affect how care is delivered.

The -1 amendment would allow Sky Lakes to seek a variance and be recognized as a Type C hospital. This would enable our Nurse Staffing Committee to continue working collaboratively with nurses, hospital administration and union partners to develop staffing plans that reflect local conditions while maintaining patient safety and nurse protections.

Importantly, this amendment does not eliminate Nurse Staffing Committees. It does not eliminate accountability. It preserves the role of Sky Lakes nurses at the decision-



making table and acknowledges that those closest to patient care are best positioned to provide insight and understanding when circumstances change.

Flexibility is not about lowering standards. It is about keeping beds open, preventing service closures, and ensuring that patients in rural communities are not forced to travel for hours for care because regulations cannot adapt to realities of rural healthcare.

The -1 amendment strikes a reasonable balance. It protects patients, respects nurses, and provides rural hospitals like Sky Lakes with the necessary tools to remain viable while continuing to deliver safe, high-quality care.

We respectfully urge your support for House Bill 4074 and the -1 amendment.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our perspective.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Nurse Staffing Committee
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Manager Co-Chair
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