

Submitter: Carrie Slyter
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Health Care
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4074

Testimony Opposing HB 4074

By: Carrie Slyter, RN, BSN, Oregon Medical-Surgical Nurse, 27 Years
Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Carrie Slyter, and I have been a Medical-Surgical nurse in Oregon for 26 years, serving as a bedside RN, relief charge nurse, and wound care/skin champion. I am writing to state clearly and firmly that I strongly oppose HB 4074. This bill weakens the protections established under HB 2697 and will directly place patients at risk.

Over the course of my career, patient acuity has increased dramatically. Today's patients arrive sicker, with more complex needs, and require closer monitoring than ever before. Even now, nurses struggle to complete the essential tasks that keep patients safe. Increasing nurse-to-patient ratios only ensures that more basic but critical care will be missed.

When ratios rise, the first things lost are the fundamental tasks that prevent harm: turning patients, walking them after surgery, bathing to reduce infection risk, assisting with toileting to prevent falls and skin breakdown. These are not optional. They are the foundation of safe care, and they require time, time that nurses do not have when they are responsible for too many patients.

As a wound and skin champion, I see the consequences of missed care. Pressure injuries, infections, preventable readmissions, and patient decline do not happen randomly. They happen when staffing is inadequate. These injuries are painful, costly, and often life-altering. HB 4074 will make them more common.

Nurses are also managing constant interruptions. We carry multiple communication devices, answer nonstop alerts, and respond to bed alarms and call lights while performing medication administration and assessments. Increasing our workload increases risk. Errors are not the result of nurses being careless, they are the result of impossible conditions. HB 4074 creates those conditions.

Nurses are leaving the profession in large numbers because they cannot practice safely under these pressures. Moral injury and burnout are not abstract ideas. They are what happens when nurses know what their patients need but cannot physically complete the work. As someone who trains new nurses and has a daughter entering the field, I want them to work in an environment where they can practice safely and ethically. HB 4074 moves us in the opposite direction.

Before supporting this bill, I ask you to picture yourself or a loved one in a hospital bed under the conditions this bill permits: waiting too long for help while vomiting, lying in a soiled bed because no one can get there, listening to an IV pump alarm for 15 minutes, waiting in pain because the nurse is tied up in another room. This is the reality when staffing ratios are unsafe. No Oregon patient or any patient deserves

this.

If HB 4074 passes, preventable harm will increase. Delayed responses, missed assessments, medication errors, and avoidable complications will follow. These outcomes are predictable, and once they occur, they cannot be undone.

Nurses are asking you to listen to the people who understand bedside care because we live it every shift. HB 2697 was passed to correct longstanding unsafe practices.

HB 4074 undermines that progress and puts both patients and nurses at risk.

For the safety of Oregon patients and the sustainability of the nursing workforce, I urge you to reject HB 4074 and uphold the standards intended by HB 2697.

Respectfully,

Carrie Slyter, RN, BSN

Medical-Surgical Nurse, 27 Years