

## PLEASE OPPOSE HOUSE BILL 4074

Thank you, Chair Nosse, Vice-chairs Nelson, Diehl and committee,

I am here in opposition to HB 4074, a revision to Oregon's historic hospital nurse staffing bill. These changes substantially weaken the historic improvements in nurse staffing levels and undermine the advances in high quality patient care we have achieved to date.

Research clearly shows that nurse staffing levels in hospitals first and foremost improve patient outcomes, increasing timeliness of medication administration and treatments, reducing falls and increasing patient satisfaction.<sup>1</sup> Just as importantly, safe staffing levels reduce staff turnover, reduce rates of nurse burnout and depression and even reduce rates of depression and suicide.<sup>2</sup>

Within ONA we say that "Safe staffing saves lives" and that not only refers to patient lives, safe staffing saves the lives of healthcare providers.

The most dangerous part of this legislation is the proposal to exempt more rural hospitals from basic safe staffing requirements. Plainly put, this legislation would formally embrace rural healthcare disparities as law. I am saddened to think that a rural lawmaker would pursue lower healthcare standards for your community.

Research clearly shows that nationally, rural communities and patients experience disparities, including factors such as

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK74315/>, <https://www.mdpi.com/2227-9032/9/4/387?>

<sup>2</sup> <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2825639>

increased distances to receive care and reduced availability of providers resulting in lower likeliness to seek care to start with, and when our patients do access care, rural patients experience longer delays in treatments, lower likelihood of receiving necessary and lifesaving care and greater chance of dying from serious conditions like heart attack and stroke.<sup>3</sup> This is not acceptable and should not be accepted as state law.

Oregonians in rural and coastal communities deserve access to high quality care, just like Oregonians who live in urban communities. A bill like HB 4074 that establishes and embraces health disparities throughout the state is simply unacceptable.

Thank you.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://hms.harvard.edu/news/importance-access>,  
<https://www.physicianleaders.org/articles/doi/10.55834/halmj.3701318410>