

**TESTIMONY FOR THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTHCARE  
In Regards to Senate Bill 754  
February 25, 2019**

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Chair Monnes-Anderson, Vice-chair Linthicum, and members of the committee, thank you so much for the opportunity to share testimony on SB 754, which addresses the critical issue of nurse faculty shortages in Oregon.

The Oregon Center for Nursing (OCN) is a nonprofit state nursing workforce center with a mission to gather information related to the nursing workforce, identify areas of need, and convene interested groups together to address issues we uncover. Nursing is the largest segment of the healthcare profession, and our data on nursing combined with our statewide partnerships allow us to provide a rich picture of Oregon's nursing workforce.

OCN formed in 2002 in response to the impending nursing workforce shortages identified through numerous studies. In tracing back the reasons why Oregon could have a nursing shortage, OCN found the lack of nurse faculty as a critical obstacle to building a workforce to serve all Oregonians.

Since 2009, OCN has released four reports on nurse faculty, and each report shows that the nurse faculty shortage remains unchanged. As of our most recent reports:

- 50% of nurse faculty reported their intention to retire by 2025
- Despite reporting high levels of job satisfaction, more than 60% of nurse faculty indicated they intended to look for other work
- One of the main reasons for wanting to leave faculty positions is low pay compared to their counterparts who work at the bedside.
- Compounding the issue of lower pay is the fact that many nurse faculty positions require the faculty member to have a master's degree or higher. A master's degree in nursing may cost up to \$60,000. A typical doctoral program takes five full-time years to complete, costing up to \$113,000. The combination of loan debt and pay inequity make recruiting and retaining nurse faculty difficult.

OCN has convened groups to address this issue throughout the years. Oregon's Senate Bill 4 from 2007 provided PERS exceptions for nurses who work in public institutions, as a way to retain nurses as well as nurse faculty. In 2010, OCN convened the Oregon Team, a group of educators, employers, and policy-makers to identify workable solutions on the nurse faculty shortage. They advocated for and passed Senate Bill 701, to allow nurse faculty loan repayment. This bill was only funded for one biennium. In 2015, OCN convened the Nurse Faculty Task Force, a group of educators who advised on expanded research and helped set the stage for the next round of solutions.

The challenges of recruiting and retaining nurse faculty affects nursing programs throughout the state, both in rural and urban areas. SB 754 is a step in the right direction, but it is only a piece of the overall puzzle. Nurse faculty statewide need relief from the financial burden of educating our future nurses. While providing tax credits only in rural areas, SB 754 could provide an opportunity to determine the effectiveness of tax credits as a method for recruiting and retaining nurse faculty.

If implemented, OCN is happy to collaborate with Oregon's education partners to study the impact tax credits have had on their ability to sustain and grow their nursing programs.