

**House Committee on Healthcare
Attn: Representative Andrea Salinas, Chair
900 Court St. NE
Salem, Oregon 97301**

Dear Committee,

Samaritan Health Services (SHS) emphatically supports HB 4089 which would allow for apprenticeship training for surgical technologists. Healthcare organizations such as our own have struggled with filling surgical technologist positions in Oregon due to the lack of programs in our state. By enacting an apprenticeship model, this would allow an additional pathway for qualified surgical technologists to fill the many open positions in our area.

Since the OAR became effective 7/1/2016, SHS has filled 13 full-time Surgical Technologist positions system-wide:

- Average time to fill a surgical tech position at SHS: 135 days*
- We are currently recruiting for seven full time positions. Average length of time these positions are posted: 219 days (and counting).*

SHS serves the communities of Benton, Linn, and Lincoln counties; however, our organization does not have a large pool of qualified local candidates to fill crucial surgical technologist positions. We cannot adequately serve the healthcare needs of our community without meeting this urgent need. Our organization has had to reach out to candidates in Washington and California in order to fill critical openings. An apprenticeship model could enable local candidates to upskill their abilities and create a pathway for individuals in the community to train into a career with a starting living wage of approximately \$45,000 annually.

Linn Benton Community College recently started a small surgical tech program, and many of those students are hired after completing clinical rotations at our sites. However, the limited supply of students has not fully met our needs.

The main problem is being unable to fill critical positions due to an extremely limited pool of candidates. The clear solution is supporting a surgical technician apprenticeship pathway.

Thank you to the committee for your support of HB 4089.

Sincerely,

*Samaritan Health Services
Professional Development Department
Talent Acquisition Department*