



**Samaritan
Health Services**

Professional Development

815 NW 9th St, Suite 252
Corvallis, OR 97330
Office: 541-768-5116
Fax: 541-768-6058
professionaldevelopment@samhealth.org
samhealth.org

March 16, 2021

Chair Rachel Prusak
House Committee on Health Care
900 Court St NE
Salem, OR 97301

Chair Prusak and Members of the Committee

Samaritan Health Services urges you to support HB2464, which would help address a critical shortage of Surgical Technicians in hospitals by creating an efficient and effective “apprenticeship to certification” pathway.

The field of surgical technology is very important to keep our hospitals running smoothly, and right now there are very few avenues for certification. This bill would help to open more avenues for certification by creating an apprenticeship route, which would help to address the healthcare shortage of surgical techs. Since the passage of the 2016 restrictions surrounding the hiring of Surgical Technicians, the average time for SHS to fill a surgical tech position is 135 days. HB2464 will create a pathway for staff currently employed in the hospitals to become apprentices and become certified while they are working.

Samaritan has implemented a very successful apprenticeship/pathway program for our Medical Assistants. It allows qualified individuals in non-clinical positions – including those who may have faced obstacles pursuing traditional education - to begin working towards a clinical career. The model operates in Linn, Benton, and Lincoln counties, and allows us to invest in and keep skilled individuals within our workforce. In addition to those benefits, similar programs like that in HB2464 could also provide opportunities and a realistic career path for individuals whose jobs have been impacted by the COVID crisis. The starting wage for a surgical tech is around \$50,000 per year; a living wage available in the medical field without a degree.

Samaritan Health Services urges your support of HB2464 and recommends that Oregon’s House and Senate leadership consider this initiative as a component of economic recovery at this critical point in time.

Sincerely,

Samaritan Health Services
Professional Development Department
Talent Acquisition Department