



Testimony in Support of House Bill HB 3016

May 5, 2021

Senate Committee on Health Care

Bruce Humphreys BSN, RN

Good afternoon Chair Patterson, Vice Chair Knopp, and members of the committee. My name is Bruce Humphreys and I am a member of the Oregon Nurses Association (ONA). I have been a practicing nurse and front line caregiver in Oregon for over 33 years. Our members are the back bone of health care in Oregon and deserve to have all the resources available at their disposal to provide safe patient care. The most cost effective way to provide that patient care is with adequate, appropriate nurse staffing. I stand in strong support of HB 3016, which would update our staffing law under executive order to ensure collaborative problem-solving during times of crisis. HB 3016 is necessary due to the need created by the healthcare crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

When the current iteration of the Nurse Safe Staffing law went into effect, it had language to suspend some of the laws' provisions during a declared disaster. At the time of the last update of the Staffing law, no one predicted or prepared for a world wide pandemic that would last 15 months with no end in sight. The pandemic created a crisis unseen in the US for over 100 years and our nurses stepped up to provide the care needed against overwhelming numbers of critically sick and dying patients. Nurses came to work each shift, in the face of great personal risk, and provided the high quality care their patients deserved. At the peak of the pandemic and during subsequent surges, nurses understood that the critical staffing needs in the ICU's and Covid units were going to affect staffing throughout Oregon's hospitals. The current law allows suspension of hospital staffing plans as long as a disaster or emergency declaration remains in effect. The Oregon Nurses Association recognizes that allowing for an unlimited suspension of those staffing plans is an issue that requires a solution. That solution is HB 3016.

HB 3016 updates current law to maintain nurse-informed safe staffing levels during extended public health emergencies by:

Reconvening staffing committees within 30 days, so nurses and administrators can quickly come together in an emergency to write collaborative and flexible staffing plans informed by real-time data and on the ground experiences of frontline caregivers.

- Requiring approval within 90 days by the joint nurse-administration staffing committees of deviations from pre-emergency staffing plans and
- Ensuring both state and federal emergency declarations trigger informed safe staffing procedures.



As an Oregon Nurses Association member-leader, I have been involved in supporting legislation for Safe Nurse Staffing for over 20 years. I have appreciated the support and guidance of the Oregon Legislature during that time. I have practiced as a front line caregiver throughout my career and have been negatively impacted by unsafe staffing levels. I have helped to develop staffing plans and served on the Staffing Committee at the hospital where I worked for 33 years. The Safe Nurse Staffing Law helped me provide safe, appropriate, cost-effective nursing care. HB 3016 will provide a needed update to the existing law and I ask for a YES vote from this committee and unanimous passage from the Oregon Senate. Thank you.