



Oregon's Voice for Long Term Care & Senior Housing

February 3, 2022
Senate Committee on Labor and Business
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 972301

Re: Support for Senate Bill 1545

Chair Taylor, Vice Chair Knopp, and members of the committee,

The Oregon Health Care Association (OHCA) represents long term care providers across the state that provide services and supports to 64,000 Oregonians every day in either licensed care facilities or in their home. Oregon's long term care system is founded on key principles of a resident's independence, dignity, choice, and privacy.

OHCA supports Senate Bill (SB) 1545 because long term care is in dire need of sustained investments. Oregon has a steadily increasing aging population; services for seniors and people living with disabilities must be better supported to meet the demand within the next five to ten years. Providers face immense fiscal challenges, and workers are exhausted. Health care, among top sectors hit hardest by the pandemic, is ready to welcome the Future Ready 2022 workforce package.

OHCA sees the potential opportunities to bolster the health care workforce and ensure investments in long term care. The time is now to invest in our seniors and those who support it. This package provides tools to emphasize investments in people of color, women, people with low incomes, rural communities, and veterans. Students would be allowed to build on previous experiences and education in seeking new certification or licensure. In an industry reliant heavily upon training to advance ones' career ladder, this expansion, as well as greater apprenticeship opportunities, are wins for the health care sector.

There are opportunities for innovation in health care and long term care settings if given the chance to do so. This investment would provide wraparound services like childcare and other crucial supports for our health care professionals. Furthermore, investments in mental health, training, recruitment, and retention are key priorities of focus.

The OHCA urges support of SB 1545.

Thank you,

Libby Batlan, Senior Vice President of Government Relations, OHCA