



February 7, 2022

The Honorable Rachel Prusak
Chair, House Committee on Health Care
State Capitol
Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: House Bill 4003 – nurse workforce

Dear Chair Prusak and members of the committee:

Providence Health & Services values the strong partnership we share with our nursing professionals. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, we have continued to witness the unwavering commitment of our nurses to serve patients in self-less ways. Their clinical excellence has been vital to our success, but the reality is the job is not easy – we have seen many experienced nurses leave the profession and are having trouble recruiting nurses at the pace we need.

Currently, Providence has more than 450 open nursing positions in Oregon. House Bill 4003 takes immediate actions to support the nursing workforce and establishes a pathway for strengthening it over time. Today Providence would like to outline our support for three important aspects of the bill.

Provide the flexibilities necessary to infuse the health care workforce with qualified caregivers: HB 4003 will allow qualified nurse students to perform specified duties as a student intern while under the supervision of a registered nurse. We struggle to fill nursing faculty positions and provide enough clinical sites to meet the needs. Allowing our nursing students to work while earning clinical hours will help close the gap in the workforce, for clinical sites as well as faculty. Providence supports legislation to allow the State Board of Nursing to issue nurse internship licenses as a critical next step to bolster the nursing workforce. This change in legislation will positively impact both our schools of nursing and healthcare institutions.

Expand temporary, out-of-state licensure for permanent positions: The Nurse Practice Act currently allows nurses to work on a temporary license while waiting for endorsement for an Oregon license in specific areas of care only. There are critical nursing needs in all areas of care in Oregon and expanding the areas eligible for temporary licensure will allow health system to hire nurses from out of state and quickly fill critical open positions. In addition, extending the time a non-resident nurse on a temporary license can practice in Oregon from 30 to 90-days will allow these out-of-state nurses to continue working when there is a delay in endorsement for legitimate reasons.

Care for our caregivers: At Providence, our caregivers are the cornerstone of our ministries, bringing compassion to every patient interaction. We believe that the well-being of our caregivers

is of utmost importance. We support equitable allocation of state resources to serve wellbeing of nurses, as they do providers licensed by the Oregon Medical Board.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment. We hope the committee will join us in support of House Bill 4003.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jennifer Gentry, RN". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jennifer" being the most prominent part.

Jennifer Gentry, MSN, RN, NEA-BC
Chief clinical and nursing officer
Providence Health & Services - Oregon