

Dear Senate Chair:

Senator Deb Patterson and members of the Senate Committee on Health Care.

Regarding the House Bill HB4106, I urge you to not pass this bill. I am currently an enrolled student at Mt. Hood Community College (MHCC) in the Surgical Technology Program. I have worked my way through the necessary prerequisites to be eligible for this program and have been accepted into this degree earning program to graduate this June. This program only accepts 20 students a year and I did not get accepted the first year I applied. In order to prepare a student for a career in the OR the program adheres to certain standards including personality traits, academic standing, and questions relating to ethics and honesty. MHCC is a wonderful community college I have been attending for the last 20 years on and off until I decided to get into the Surgical Technology Program.

To be eligible to be qualified for the Surgical Technology Program you must first meet math, writing and english grades. Next up is getting through the 3 terms of Anatomy and Physiology (A&P), which can be challenging on their own. Microbiology is also needed and is a qualifying class/grade that needs to be met. I've learned so much about the human body and what happens depending on diseases or other health related issues. Without these courses beforehand getting into more health care related fields most know nothing about what is happening and why. The Prerequisites prepare us for the happening and whys. The knowledge I have gained from A&P, Microbiology, and my specialty specific courses in the program have provided me with an understanding of the reasons why the surgery requires the instrumentation and equipment as well as an understanding of what the surgeons needs to complete the surgical procedure. These courses give me a better background in healthcare, without this background a provider would not be as effective at this profession.

Since being accepted into MHCC Surgical Technology Program in 2020, I have learned about so many aspects of what goes on in and around the Operating Room (OR). Sterile processing is a huge factor in making sure that we can provide sterile instruments for any surgery. With my training at MHCC we go over sterile processing and make sure that we understand how and why the instrumentation is cleaned for every new procedure. There are times when you open an instrument tray in the OR and it is contaminated. It's important to understand going into the OR what you are looking for when contamination is concerned and how it happens. MHCC Surgical Technology Program has given us a very detailed instructions about sterility, it is part of our core curriculum.

MHCC also teaches us OR etiquette and how to maintain professional affective behaviors. This prepares us to be a better employee in the future. We learn how to open gowns and gloves sterile. We know how to set up basic procedures before we even set foot into the OR. Our lab curriculum with in the first year of our program, gives us the wonderful basics and when you walk into the OR in the second year of the program, you're nervous. You're nervous but you know what you are doing and what you should be doing as a vital role in the OR. We know when something wrong has happened, and we know to state anything that may be wrong right then and there in the moment. The lab skills learned and practiced in the first year of the program prepare us to have basic skills necessary to enter the OR during our clinical rotations in the second year. Despite the nervousness of moving into clinical, we have practiced these skills so many times, that our muscle memory kicks in to perform through the nervousness. We have the knowledge base that allows us to state if something is not correct or sterile in the moment before it can impact the patient.

My classmates and I have spent so much time, effort, and hours on homework and clinicals that for this bill to pass it feels like this work towards a career, the betterment of ourselves and our families, has been for nothing!

Not everyone is made for the operating room. My graduating year alone, nothing to do with MHCCs program or teachings, but we have lost 6 people. We are a graduating class of 14 instead of 20 because people realized this job just was not for them. I do not think that passing this bill will necessarily bring in the people that they need/ want to fill these roles and it may be a waste of time for the state to pay these people to find out versus students paying for their own education to realize it is not for them.

From my experience in the clinical aspect and from my educational standpoint, I do not feel that it is beneficial for this bill to pass. It will affect college enrollment numbers for the surgical technology programs. We do not have many of them around Oregon and Washington. MHCC truly prepares their students exceptionally well to be ready for the operating room. I urge you not to pass this bill HB4106. I think it will detrimentally hurt how far Surgical Technologists have come to becoming a respected part of the OR team.

Thank you

Janelle Inman

Surgical Technology student at MHCC