

Chala Youngblood
645 SE Reed Market Rd #2
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RE: PLEASE SUPPORT HB 2697

Dear behavioral health and health care committee members,

My name is Chala Youngblood and I am a nurse at St. Charles Medical Center, Bend.

One night shift we were short nurses so we had to use the "buddy system" for breaks. The nurse I was buddying with had 2 ICU level patients, and I had 2 ICU level patients that were both on ventilators. One of my patients woke up suddenly while I was in the break room and my buddy nurse was in with a different patient room. My patient ended up self-extubating - removing his own ventilator tube. The patient was ultimately okay, but the potential for death with a self-extubation is very high. The patient did require reintubation a few hours later. If we would have had a lunch nurse, as we require in our staffing plan, the patient would have been watched more closely and we could have stopped him from accidental self extubation. These are not uncommon stories, and they occur at every hospital in every corner of the state, regardless of the size of the facility or the geographic location.

Our loved ones and family all deserve the same quality and safe care in our hospitals no matter where we live. Nursing care standards do not change based on the location or size of the hospital. In fact, because rural hospitals have fewer ancillary and support staff members, much more of the care can become the responsibility of the nurse. Oregon's critical access hospitals and rural medical centers often face challenges in recruitment and retention of their workforce, and this legislation will create healthier work environments for nurses in Oregon's rural hospitals, to the benefit of the communities they serve.

Thank you.

Chala Youngblood