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RE: PLEASE SUPPORT HB 2699

Good afternoon members of the House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care.

My name is Kendra Ward and I am a nurse at Mckenzie-Willamette Medical Center. Recently, I experienced a shift that highlights the struggles nurses face as the short staffing crisis rages on.

In addition to being displaced from my home unit for the past few months due to renovations and attempts to salvage staffing on other floors, I struggle daily with the raging burnout so many of us feel. During this particular shift, after 11pm, I was primary care for 5 patients. My charge nurse attempted to fulfill the role of CNA, but throughout the night this only added up to taking 2 sets of vitals out of the 10+ that I had to collect and record. 2 of my 5 patients were new admissions, requiring extra documentation and time spent in their rooms. 4 of my 5 patients were confused, meaning they require extra check-ins to ensure they are safe and their needs are being met. 2 of my 5 patients were Covid +, meaning I had to spend extra time donning and doffing PPE to ensure my other patients and myself were protected from the virus. 2 of my 5 patients had difficulties speaking or were deaf, requiring extra intervention each time I attempted to communicate with them. In order to ensure safety, I had to spend more than 45 minutes at a time with a confused elderly patient.

What do you do when you don't even have the staff to supply a "skeleton crew" of workers?

What do you do when there is no option for basic support, let alone additional support?

I left the shift (an hour late) feeling defeated.

Tired.

Drained.

Empty.

Knowing I had to return the next day and face the same situations.

And the worst part?

I know that, despite this impacting me so heavily, this affects my patients more.

I could have provided better care for my patients had we been appropriately staffed. That night I provided the BEST care I was humanly able to provide. But I did not provide the BEST care. It was impossible.

Impossible.

Let that sink in.

It will be IMPOSSIBLE for you to receive the best care while your nurses remain short staffed. It will be IMPOSSIBLE for best patient outcomes to occur when you are unable to provide the resources needed to meet this goal.

We are killing our nurses and slowly killing our patients at the same time.

It's an awful, horrible cycle. It needs to end.

Please support HB 2697.

Urging your support,

Kendra Ward