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February 20, 2023

To the House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care in Support of HB 2700:

My name is Leah Carr and I am a nurse at Providence Portland Medical Center. In my unit, nurses have been forced to take patient care loads of 5 patients to one nurse, and most of the time we either have no CNA on the floor to help, or have a CNA for less than the required hours by our staffing grid, which is the full 12 hour shift.

Because our unit doesn't have enough night-shift staff and due to immense turnover, nurses are put in situations where they cannot provide adequate care to patients and go home after their shifts feeling incredibly burnt-out and stressed.

Call lights sometimes go unanswered for 1-2 hours due to prioritization of more urgent needs. As a result, many patients suffer unnecessarily prolonged pain, or have soiled themselves due to lack of assistance from staff.

The high level of patient to RN ratios, increased RN responsibilities, burnout, and turnover has made it impossible to provide even an adequate level of patient safety.

These experiences have motivated me to take this additional action to also write to the legislature because the situation at hand is urgent in Oregon and only strong, swift action, like HB 2697, will create the positive changes we all yearn to see.

I have also recently left the unit and moved on to a different care setting (inpatient dialysis) because the conditions and staff turnover remained unchanged and my mental health couldn't take it anymore. After two and a half years spent on my unit and after advocating for my unit with several leadership people (recent interrim CNO, new CNO, my nurse manager, and my nurse manager's boss), it's clear to me that simply waiting for spontaneous and adequate change will not work and will never work. The only hope is legislative intervention.

Nurses are leaving the bedside for travel nursing or for outpatient jobs due to the current working conditions forcing them to feel that they have no choice but to leave the inpatient setting in order to keep their sanity. Sadly, many nurses have left this amazing profession altogether. I urge you to pass HB 2697.

Leah Carr

