

Submitter: Marianne Zundel

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

Measure: HB2697

Good evening, Chair and committee members. My name is Marianne Zundel, I've been a nurse for 43 years. I work in Eugene at Sacred Heart Hospital on the Behavioral Health unit. I am at retirement age. I hope to work for two more years- but it all depends on having adequate staffing.

Adequate staffing is more than just numbers. IF we have enough trained nurses on each unit- it will prevent a psych nurse from having to be sent to care for a team of medical patients. Psych nurses who haven't cared for medical patients in decades would need to have comprehensive training to do so. Instead, we are facing a few days worth of training at best. I urge you to pass and even strengthen HB #2697 to prevent this disaster from happening.

Adequate staffing means having enough RN's and CNA's on the unit. For some reason the hospital is talking about doing away with CNA's. This is what happened the other day when a medical unit was without a CNA. The nurse was trying to give a controlled med to a patient when an alarm went off. She turned to take care of the patient to prevent them from falling. The next day she was called into the Nurse Manager's office as she didn't scan the med correctly when she gave it due to being interrupted. She said it was one of the worst days of her entire long career and that this was the first time she was ever written up. Why? actually it was exactly due to not having enough staffing, not having a CNA to care for this patient.

She was then told she never should have taken such a heavy patient assignment. Her exact comment was "what was I suppose to do?". "The charge nurse was already crying", overwhelmed by the demands of the day with too few staff to handle it. Nurses are traumatized and dispirited when they have to give substandard care especially when they know what to do but don't have enough staff to do it.

This experienced nurse wanted to work till the end of the year, instead, she is seriously thinking of hanging up her nursing shoes as we speak. IF we can have adequate staffing, more of us seasoned nurses will remain at the bedside, without it- we will not. Thank you for helping meet everyone's goal of safe patient care.