

Submitter: Katherine Noble

On Behalf Of: OFNHP

Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

Measure: HB2697

I work in Kaiser's home health department as a physical therapist. Within the last 3 years, we've had at least 5 PTs leave the department or transition to non-patient facing roles, yet, the PTs remaining still have to cover the majority of the same territory stretching from Portland to Rhododendron, Mollala, Forest Grove, Troutdale and Battleground. Some of those positions are deemed no longer needed and we've lost that FTE. We have some travel PTs helping out but it's frustrating to be understaffed for over 3 years, not to mention being consistently understaffed for nursing and OTs. This affects how quickly we load can see a patient once referred and some patients wait weeks for an evaluation to a understaffed discipline, while many others are referred to other agencies and lose the benefit of being seen by Kaiser clinicians with care coordination. Even worse, we are steadily struggling with retention of our current nurses and therapists amidst this staffing crisis as they feel over burdened with their ever growing workload and its impact on their mental and physical well being. We need minimum staffing requirements so that we can better serve our patients in a timely manner to avoid poor patient outcomes from having to wait for treatment and to attract new therapist and keep our current therapists to make this job we love one that we can continue to perform long term. Thank you for your time.