

Submitter: Adam Stewart

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

Measure: HB2697

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Nurse Testimony in Support of HB 2697

To the House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care

My name is Adam Stewart. I am a Trauma nurse at Oregon Health and Science University on unit 13A.

The healthcare system in Oregon needs attention to staffing ratios. I am entrusted with the lives of individuals on a daily basis at work. My ability to provide safe, compassionate, and medically appropriate care is severely limited by the amount of work put on my plate. In many of the shifts I work, I am faced with the challenge of almost not being able to provide the ordered care to patients because there is too much to do and not enough qualified hands or time to do it. Our patient populations are sicker now than ever before, yet hospital units are staffed as if every patient does not have a dynamic health condition. Current staffing does not accommodate fluctuations in patient conditions very well. This means that if I have a sicker patient, my other less ill/injured patients are not going to get as much of my time and attention because it is being used on the more medically fragile one.

I start at 0700 in the morning and it's common to not get my first break until at least 6 hours into the shift. It is also common for me to work 12 hours without a proper lunch break. Can you imagine trying to maintain enough mental acuity to problem solve and make critical decisions to handle the "surprises" that happen with medically fragile patients without adequate breaks? It is not safe. Would you freely give up your legal breaks on a daily basis or be content with your loved one not getting the safe care they deserve because their nurse is too busy?

We need staffing laws that accommodate the dynamic changes in patient acuity as they occur. This will be safer for nurses and ensure patients receive the care they need and deserve. This will also help with nurse burnout so we do not continue to lose our experienced nurses who are critically needed at the bedside.

Please support HB 2697 and give nurses what they really need: help.

Sincerely yours,
Adam Stewart, BSN-RN