

In regard to HB 2697

I am a nurse at OHSU in Portland. In my professional experience, OHSU and the Oregon Health Authority have been unwilling or unable to provide safe staffing for hospitalized patients. The current nurse staffing has been ignored for years with no consequences from OHA. Stronger laws to enforce safe ratios are needed because hospital administrators refuse to follow the current laws.

On my current floor, but also other floors that I have worked on during my time at OHUS, skipping breaks is so common that most nurses think that it is normal and expected. It's common for me to miss my lunches and breaks at least once a week. Due to the lack of nursing staff and support staff, it is unsafe for me to take my breaks. Additionally, I worked on a different unit at OHSU that routinely staffed the floor with only 2 nurses; so, we didn't get any lunches or breaks for 12.5 hours. This would happen for multiple shifts in a row.

The best way to attract and retain nurses is to provide a safe working environment. Stronger laws need to be in place and the ratios need to be enforced with consequences for hospitals that are out of compliance.

Sincerely,

Dustin Andrews, RN, BSN.