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On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

Measure: HB2697

Nurses and medical professionals are crucial to our health care system. We can all agree on our community's well being. Access to good care should be available to all Oregonians. There are existing barriers to equitable health outcomes. Here's how ratios for patient care can push against those barriers:

Support for safe staffing levels ensures steady supply of living wage jobs

Support for safe staffing levels provides resiliency in our healthcare system; a bare-bones staff ratio will not have capacity for emergencies

Support for safe staffing levels ensure healthcare organizations forecast their costs, training needs, and succession plans. Opening up opportunities for new nurses as others retire or are promoted

On a personal level, when I hear dialysis centers are having issues with staffing - I am so frustrated. In Jan 2022 my relative's dialysis was canceled during a storm. The center didn't have staff that could make it in. Only ONE nurse manager was notifying patients or getting them admitted to a hospital for treatment. My MIL did not get a notification. At all. The center has struggled in the past few years to retain good technicians. Access to dialysis (replacing the function of an entire organ!!) is crucial. A rushed, overworked tech or missing treatment can lead to hospitalization or death.

In my observation, the large for-profit companies running clinics, hospitals, networks..are skimping on staffing and leaving our health systems weak to failure - minor like my example above and major. Since these corporations have not made their business decisions for the public good, it will take regulation and enforcement of patient staffing ratios to keep our critical health systems HEALTHY.