

Submitter: Mhari Scott

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

Measure: HB2697

Thank you, chair Nosse and committee members. I work as a direct care nurse at Providence Portland Medical Center. I'm in favor of House Bill 2697, and want to share what a 1:4 ratio looks like in a medical-surgical setting - one of the ratios this bill would protect.

The standard of care is to round on all patients hourly. Between patients, you need about five minutes to pull, check and waste medications, gather supplies, and find extra hands for two-person care. Add five minutes of hourly charting for each patient and you have five minutes left per patient per hour. None of this includes responsibilities like coordinating with their care teams; admitting or discharging patients; answering call lights and updating family members. Even if you only spent ten minutes per hour on all these combined, you'd have only two and a half minutes left to spend with each patient every hour.?

It can take ten minutes for a low-mobility person to get from the bed to the commode alongside it, let alone empty their bladder or bowels, take medications, and undergo an assessment. These are the most basic of nursing tasks and don't include necessities like wound care, transfusions, or patient education.

So, every day, all day, the nurse has to prioritize based on who will suffer the most from delays in care. At this ratio, your patients are hopefully stable enough to wait. But a pressure ulcer can begin in only one to two hours. A patient who isn't walked can lose mobility in days. The shame that comes from soiling yourself when no one can help you to the toilet in time is instantaneous and lasting.

So nurses skip breaks to chart; sustain injuries when no one can offer extra hands, go for long stretches without food or drink or bathroom breaks, and will push through fatigue and overwhelm until burnout sets in, because the alternative is certain suffering for their patients. ?

This is a 1:4 ratio with stable patients, which I'm hoping you will vote to protect. With more patients, or with higher patient acuity, it feels dangerous. The ratios that are being requested in this bill are the bare minimum to ensure safety - for our nurses, our loved ones and, ultimately, ourselves.