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Senate Higher Education Committee
Oregon State Capitol

To Chair Dembrow and Members of the Senate Higher Education Committee:

I am writing in full support of SB523 concerning the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN).

In 2019, SB3 gave community colleges the ability to offer applied baccalaureate (BAS) degrees if authorized by the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC). However, if colleges are to offer a bachelor-level component in nursing, further legislation is needed to call the nursing degree a BSN, which is the industry and regulator-recognized title, rather than a BAS-N, which is not recognized by employers and nursing boards.

- A community college option for earning a BSN degree would increase access to four-year nursing degrees across Oregon and particularly in rural areas.
- A student with a BSN has more opportunities for promotion and higher pay.
- Many community college RN graduates are paying more expensive out-of-state, online providers to attain a BSN. Local community college alternatives would provide a lower-cost option.
- If community colleges were able to offer the BSN, it would provide a valuable local option to RN graduates who are not currently pursuing the BSN to continue their education with familiar faculty, learning environments, student supports and - critically - a more affordable career pathway than currently exists.
- An RN-to-BSN program from a community college will provide the opportunity for more equitable outcomes for underserved, often marginalized populations, as education from community colleges is a more accessible, affordable option.

Prior resistance from colleges and universities currently offering BSN degrees no longer holds weight in today's workforce shortage environment where we are graduating less than half the nurses required to meet our needs across the state. There are now limitless opportunities to educate nurses and we will need every educational institution that is able to graduate more nurses to avoid many negative changes to our health care delivery system.

I urge you to sign on to SB523 and support higher level skills in a critical field.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Lesley J. Ogden, MD, MBA
Chief Executive Officer

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