



Legacy Health  
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February 28, 2023

House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care  
Oregon State Legislature  
Salem, Oregon

Re: HB 2697

Chair Nosse and Members of the Committee:

Legacy is a nonprofit health care provider in the Portland-Vancouver area and mid-Willamette Valley with an integrated network of care providers in over 100 primary care, urgent care and specialty care clinics, and six community-based and nationally recognized hospitals.

Legacy values and respects our professional nursing staff and frontline workers. Their contributions in service to our patients, families, and communities are unmeasurable. They are our most valuable resource. We understand the stress and moral distress caused by responding to the COVID-19 pandemic and a decreasing workforce.

However, HB 2697 is not the answer and poses a serious threat to our already fragile health care system, and Legacy opposes it as written.

Staffing is a complicated and dynamic process and will not improve by treating nurses, staff, and patients as numbers. In hospitals today, there is a constant ebb and flow of patients with constantly changing needs and acuity. We rely on and trust the expertise and professional judgment of our unit-based nurse leaders, direct care nurses and staff to assess and determine staffing needs based on the needs of the patients within their unit on any given day.

We know that patient care is a team effort. It takes a variety of nurses, staff, and providers to ensure we can provide safe and quality care. Hospitals choose different configurations of support staff to provide patient care, and all nurses are not the same. Our nursing staff is diverse with different education, knowledge and skills, and varying degrees of experience and capacity to care for patients. Mandated ratios do not account for these differences. A new graduate nurse and a seasoned nurse would not be given the same patient care assignment.

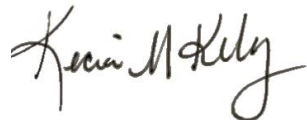
Hospitals today are challenged by the state's lack of workforce capacity as well as lack of capacity in the continuum of care needed to safely discharge patients who no longer need acute hospital care. HB 2697 will not increase our health care workforce, nor will it

address hospital capacity challenges. Instead, it will result in the closure of beds when hospitals cannot meet the mandated staffing ratios. This will limit access to care in our communities at a time when we need to be working toward solutions to increase access.

HB 2697 does not provide any material support or improvement to hospital staffing. It simply adds more administrative burden with no real value for staff or patients.

Thank you for the opportunity to express our concerns with HB 2697.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kecia Kelly". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kecia Kelly, DNP, RN  
Senior Vice President and Chief Nursing Officer