

March 20, 2023

The Honorable Courtney Neron, Chair
House Committee on Education

Delivered electronically via OLIS

Chair Neron, Members of the Committee:

I'm writing today in support of House Bill 3236 because it would make meaningful investments in our future workforce.

HB 3236 would allow expenditure of Statewide Education Initiatives Account funds for regional and technical education programs. Specifically, the bill allocates significant funding for the Willamette Career Academy that would allow continued exposure of students to health care careers.

Salem Health partners with Willamette Career Academy's basic nursing skills program, co-employing their nursing instructor and participating in the ongoing development and review of the program's curriculum. In the fall of 2022, 29 second-year students in the program participated in a pilot project to provide students a chance to observe a variety of health care careers. Over 12 weeks, these students had opportunities to shadow our staff in multiple units, including the ICU, emergency department, respiratory therapy, imaging, and volunteer services. Salem Health staff representing our community health education, patient advocates/medical ethics, infection prevention, and diabetes education presented on their areas of focus.

As health care professionals in an industry that is currently understaffed, we were encouraged to find students who were engaged and interested in learning more about the wide variety of careers that are open to them. We hope to continue this program next fall and look forward to some of these students joining the Salem Health family.

At Salem Health, our workforce is at the center of everything we do to care for the communities we serve. HB 3236 will help us build a future workforce that can continue our legacy of care. I urge your support for this important bill.

Sincerely,



Leilani R. Slama
Chief Communications and Community Relations Officer