



3/21/2023

Good morning Co-chairs Valderrama, Campos and members of the Joint Subcommittee On Human Services,

My name is Sharlo Laukkanen and I am a Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner at the Oregon State Hospital. I have worked at the Oregon State Hospital for almost 12 years. I have worked in direct patient care as a unit Registered Nurse, as an Registered Nurse educator, and now in my current role as Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner.

Last week you heard about the functions of the Oregon State Hospital and the challenges they face but I wanted to further highlight how the current staffing crisis differentials significantly impacts patient care at the hospital in a positive way. In order to provide evidence-based care, we must have the staff to provide that care. If there is not enough staff, then patients are frequently required to stay on the unit. Tough decisions must be made when there are not an adequate number of staff. Unfortunately, treatment mall, off unit meals, and off unit activities are frequently cancelled due to staffing. This means that patients are not receiving adequate treatment. Patients may be at the hospital longer due to their inability to learn the necessary material to be able to aid and assist in their defense.

Nurses and MHTs are tired. They are tired of feeling like no one cares. They are tired of choosing to work exorbitant amounts of overtime or being forced to stay at work past their shift because there are not enough people to staff the hospital. They are tired of witnessing and experiencing violence on a daily basis. Most of all, they are tired of not being able to provide high quality care to their patients. Continuing the differential is just one way that the State can tangibly show their appreciation and let the nurses and MHTs of OSH that someone is listening and someone sees the difficult position these people are in. As you begin your budget allocation process, we urge you to keep our stories in mind so that we have the resources to to provide better care for Oregonians who need it the most.

Sharlo Laukkanen