

Testimony in support of HB 5025

Co-Chairs Fredrick and McLain, members of the committee, for the record, my name is Sarah Horn. I serve as the Chief Nursing and Clinical Operations Officer for Salem Health Hospitals and Clinics. I have been a nurse for over 21 years and am deeply proud of the profession and the care we provide our communities. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 5025, the Higher Education Coordinating Commission's budget for community colleges.

Salem Health Hospitals & Clinics is a non-profit organization with facilities that include Salem Hospital (just a few blocks away), West Valley Hospital in Dallas, and Salem Health Medical Group primary and specialty clinics spread throughout the Willamette Valley. As a whole, Salem Health serves patients in Marion and Polk, as well as those from Benton, Lincoln, and Yamhill counties.

We are proud to have a robust relationship with Chemeketa Community College. Chemeketa graduates work in virtually every discipline at Salem Health. We are particularly grateful for the nursing, pharmacy tech, and anaesthesiology techs who chose employment with Salem Health after their clinical placement experiences with us.

We are actively building on this key partnership to ensure the continued availability of clinical placements and to hire students who have trained in the wide variety of disciplines needed to support and deliver patient care in primary, secondary, and tertiary settings.

You and your colleagues have taken on weighty health care policy issues during this legislative session. Many of those concepts are still working their way through the process, but I know you've heard mention of the shortage of nurses and allied health professionals in hospitals and health systems across the state, including at Salem Health.

However, every challenge brings opportunity. At Salem Health, we're using this opportunity to build stronger, more nimble relationships with our partners in K-12 and post-secondary education. Our goals are to guarantee that we have the capacity to grow our own workforce and that the staff we need to care for our community will be trained and in place to meet the community need. As part of this effort, we've supported SB 523, which would allow community colleges to offer an RN to BSN program [a BSN is a Bachelor's of Science in Nursing].

Chemeketa is a valuable partner to Salem Health because they are responsive, able and

willing to match our pace of innovation and standards of excellence. They are accessible, both financially and culturally, to students in our primary service areas. Our historic partnership with them has been fruitful, but our needs continue to evolve as the communities we serve grow and change. I believe that you will continue to see deeper partnerships between health systems and community colleges across the state, particularly if community colleges are able to develop BSN programs.

People in Marion and Polk counties directly benefit from the excellent training and education provided at Chemeketa and at other community colleges. They do work of tremendous value for our community, and are a key partner in our mission. To that end, I ask you to join me and Salem Health in supporting HB 5025.

Thank you for your time. I'm happy to answer any questions that you might have.

If you get questions, respond, "Co-Chairs Fredrick and McLain, Senator/Representative [insert name of questioner]." As always, if you don't know the answer, say, "Thank you so much for the question. I'll need to get back to my team and follow up with you in writing."