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On Behalf of: Santiam Hospital

Committee: Higher Education Committee

Measure: SB523

Many of our nurses at Santiam Hospital are graduates of Chemeketa Community College. We serve as a clinical rotation site for Chemeketa, Linn Benton and Warner Pacific for their nursing programs. We have done that throughout the pandemic, and we will continue to make ourselves available to do that. It is of utmost importance that we continue to help move nursing students through their programs to help maintain and support our workforce.

We have an excellent tuition assistance program at our Hospital for RN to BSN as well as obtaining an RN degree for a new nurse applicant.

Many of our nurses take advantage of this to further their education and obtain their BSN.

Since I sign all of the applications, I can tell you that those continuing for their BSN are not being completed in the state of Oregon. They are all using on line, out of state programs, which are more expensive.

That money could be staying within our state.

Many of the nurses work full time; they are juggling family and work obligations. The ability to stay with in their community to pursue a BSN would be a very valuable option for them.

We need to provide flexible and affordable options to allow more RNs to continue the pursuit of furthering their education.

A different pathway.

In addition, most hospitals also offer a pay differential for having a BSN, which provides a financial benefit for the nurse and their family.

There is a growing awareness of the importance of a more highly educated nursing workforce. If we have, an opportunity to make this happen, then why would we not. Oregon needs more nurses who are well educated, and I am in support of SB 523.

Thank-you for the opportunity to provide my testimony in support of SB523.

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