



Oregon

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Before the
House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care

Senate Bill 227

The Oregon State Board of Nursing wishes to submit testimony in support of Senate Bill 227. The purpose of the bill is to add “emergency limited license” to the list of limited license types the Board may issue.

Between 2020 and 2022, under the authority of Governor Brown’s emergency declaration, the board issued approximately 10,000 “emergency authorizations” to nurses and nursing assistants from other states who wished to work in Oregon as part of COVID relief. However, at no time did the Board have any authority to regulate those nurses working in Oregon. According to the Department of Justice, because those individuals were brought in due to an administrative rule change rather than legislative action, the Board had no jurisdiction over their practice. When reports of risk to the public were made to the Board regarding some of these practitioners, the Board could not revoke their emergency authorization nor investigate the complaints.

SB 227 would add language to ORS 678.050 and 678.442 to create an additional limited license type, an emergency limited license, that can be used in future public health emergencies. This limited license would be used in place of the emergency authorization process used during the COVID response. The bill language would allow the OSBN to write rule establishing criteria under which these limited licenses would be granted. The board also would be able to discipline these limited licenses if needed.

By utilizing the limited license option, bringing in nurses during a health emergency could still be expedited; however, the Board would have authority to hold them accountable if a complaint is made to the Board.

We anticipate there will be no fiscal impact because of this bill. There is no known opposition.

The Board would be happy to answer any questions the Committee may have. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding SB 227.