



Chair Patterson, Vice-Chair Hayden and members of the Senate Committee on Health Care,

I write today on behalf of Concorde Career Colleges in support of HB 3596A, which modifies the surgical technology apprenticeship pathway adopted as part of HB 4106 (2022) and ensures that surgical technology apprenticeships can move forward in a manner that upholds educational rigor for apprentices.

Concorde was neutral on HB 4106 (2022) but opposed HB 3596 in the house. While HB 3596 was described as a simple technical fix, the introduced bill would have written out of statute any provision for Oregon Health Authority review and approval of the educational components of an apprenticeship program. We are grateful for the work that was done in the House to craft amendments that preserve educational standards needed for patient safety, and are now supportive of HB 3596A.

Concorde has engaged in discussions on surgical technology apprenticeships since the policy concept was first introduced in 2020. Our Concorde Portland campus is one of three accredited surgical technologist associate degree programs in Oregon, with the other two being at Linn Benton Community College and at Mt. Hood Community College. Our accreditation authorizes us to serve a capacity of up to three cohorts per year with a maximum of 24 students per cohort. However, in order to serve our students effectively, we must limit our cohort sizing to align with clinical site availability. For the last two years, we have therefore educated a total of 22 graduates in 2021 and 25 graduates in 2022. Our program is designed to prepare graduates with the basic knowledge and fundamental practical and professional skills needed for employment as an entry level generalist, combining academic studies, hands-on lab instruction, and clinical training in various surgical settings.

Our placement and licensure rates for surgical technology graduates well exceed benchmarks for our national accreditor, with 100% of our students in 2021 being placed and licensed. Our 2022 graduates had an 89% employment rate. Our graduates serve patients throughout the state, with many of our clinical sites located outside the Portland metro area and over half of our graduates in 2021 ultimately taking jobs outside the Portland metro area and in locations across the region. However, we acknowledge that more training opportunities are needed to fill the workforce need in this state.

Throughout discussions of this policy, our very strong message has consistently been that any apprenticeship pathway must result in all surgical technologists in our state having equivalent education. We appreciate the work done to ensure educational standards are preserved for apprentices, and for that reason support HB 3596A.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Maureen McGee".

Maureen McGee
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