

Submitter: Ashly Lehman
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Judiciary
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3070

Good afternoon Chair Kropf, Co-chairs Chotzen, and Wallan, and Members of the House Judiciary Committee. My name is Ashly Lehman, I am the lead Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner at Good Shepherd Medical Center in Hermiston Oregon. I am here to testify on behalf of House Bill 3070.

Good Shepherd is a Critical Access Hospital located in a community of approximately 20,000 residents. Our hospital has 7 trained SANE's and 1 certified SANE to provide care for our Survivors of sexual assault. We currently provide sexual assault care on average to 20 survivors a year with this number continually increasing year by year. The increase in cases is relatively due to our program being one of the few sustained programs in Eastern Oregon.

Because of this, Survivors are having to travel long distances to seek care. One Survivor that comes to mind as a perfect example of long-distance travel is one that traveled 123 miles over a mountain range, during the winter, to get an exam. This trip took them 3.5 hours to get to the hospital, then waited at the hospital for an hour for a SANE to arrive and then endured a 6 hour exam. Already this survivor has given 10.5 hours of their life for something they did not want or ask for.

But long-distance travel is just one of the many challenges we face in rural Oregon. We also struggle with turnover, lack of interest, competence, 24/7 coverage, and support. SANE turnover is high. Burnout, financial barriers, and lack of support drive SANE's out of the field.

Wait times are not only affected by a single provider covering the entire department but are largely affected by SANE availability.

Providing 24/7 coverage is nearly impossible with budgets being tight, and SANE's often juggle multiple roles in their hospitals. Most SANE's are not dedicated forensic nurses, it is in addition to having a patient load, handling complex IV placements, serving as shift charge nurses, and being available for sexual assault exams, which often happen at night or on weekends when we are not on shift.

Sexual Assault nursing is vastly autonomous and without the appropriate support it can become cumbersome. Ongoing training and competency is difficult to maintain. SANE's must stay updated on forensic evidence collection, trauma-informed care, legal procedures, and best practices-yet in rural Oregon, and access to training and

mentorship is limited.

Rural Oregon suffers from nurses who are burnt out, have limited resources to provide the same care where resources are plentiful, and are not adequately supported. We go above and beyond for our Survivors and are met with multiple barriers that we try to resolve with “what we have.”

Investing in the Oregon Sexual Assault Task Force and the SANE Certification Commission is greatly needed for rural Oregon SANE's to improve competence and confidence when providing trauma informed, quality medical care that these patients deserve no matter where they are located. Without certification, there is no standard, which continues to leave nurses feeling unsupported and incompetent and ultimately leaving the field.

Thank you for your time today and I urge you to vote yes on House Bill 3070 to support Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners and Survivors of Sexual Assault across Oregon.