

Written Testimony in Support of HB 2792 – Transparency in Healthcare Spending

Submitted by: Robert Sanders, CADC, CRM-II

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To: House Committee on Labor and Workplace Standards

Chair Grayber, Vice Chair Munoz, and distinguished members of this committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of this critical bill. At a time when hospital staffing crises are deepening and patient care is suffering, transparency is no longer optional—it is essential.

HB 2792 is a straightforward measure to require transparency in healthcare spending, ensuring Oregonians know where their healthcare dollars are going—especially when hospitals prioritize costly short-term staffing over fair wages for permanent staff.

I know firsthand how important it is to have consistent, compassionate, and experienced healthcare workers at the bedside. I've spent too much time in hospital rooms alongside people I love—watching as nurses provided not just medical care, but dignity, reassurance, and human connection.

For months, my late sister lay in a hospital bed. The nurses who cared for her weren't just administering medication; they were the ones who knew her story, her fears, and the little details that brought her comfort. They knew how she liked her blankets adjusted, which songs helped ease her anxiety, and how to talk to her in a way that made her feel safe.

That kind of care—the kind that comes from continuity and trust—is irreplaceable. Instead of investing in retaining the very nurses who form these relationships with patients and families, hospitals are diverting millions toward costly, short-term solutions that disrupt patient care. This bill seeks to change that.

Hospitals Are Wasting Millions on Short-Term Fixes Instead of Investing in Care

When hospitals refuse to negotiate fair contracts with the very workers who uphold our healthcare system, they turn to temporary replacement workers. These replacements are often paid significantly more than the dedicated staff they replace. However well-intentioned they may be, they cannot provide the same level of familiarity, trust, and consistency that long-term nurses do.

Instead of offering competitive contracts that retain experienced nurses, hospitals have chosen to allocate substantial funds toward temporary workers. During the recent Providence hospital strike in Oregon, it was reported that Providence spent approximately \$25.39 million per week on replacement nurses—\$1,400 per replacement nurse per day. ([Source: Oregon Nurses Association](#))

This approach wastes financial resources and jeopardizes patient care. Research published in the *American Journal of Infection Control* found that temporary nurses are associated with higher rates of hospital-acquired infections, a clear indication that replacing permanent staff leads to lower quality care and potential harm to patients. ([Source: HealthManagement.org](https://www.healthmanagement.org))

How much of our healthcare dollars are being wasted on these short-term hires instead of ensuring fair wages and stable staffing? Oregonians deserve to know.

Oregonians Deserve Transparency in Healthcare Spending

Hospitals are not private corporations operating without public accountability. In my work supporting individuals navigating the healthcare system, I've seen firsthand how staffing shortages impact the quality of care. They receive public funding, tax exemptions, and substantial financial support from the communities they serve. If they are choosing to spend millions on strike replacement workers instead of investing in permanent healthcare staff, we have a right to transparency.

Families are paying more while hospitals claim they can't afford fair contracts for workers. Yet, instead of investing in retention, they spend millions on temporary staffing at significantly higher costs. If hospitals truly face financial strain, Oregonians deserve transparency into where these funds are going. Yet, instead of prioritizing long-term workforce retention, hospitals continue to pour millions into temporary staffing, often at significantly higher costs per worker. This is not sustainable, not ethical, and not in the best interest of patients.

Pass This Bill—Hold Hospitals Accountable

As a Certified Alcohol and Drug Counselor, a Certified Recovery Mentor, and a former Peer Mentor with Oregon's PRIME+ Pilot, where I met participants bedside in the hospital, I have worked closely with individuals navigating our healthcare system. I have seen firsthand how critical consistent, compassionate care is for patient outcomes.

HB 2792 provides a straightforward solution: transparency in healthcare spending will ensure that hospitals prioritize long-term investment in staffing rather than costly, short-term fixes that undermine patient care. By passing this bill, you are making a clear commitment to both accountability and better patient outcomes. I've seen what happens when hospitals prioritize profit over people. It is time to make a different choice—one that puts patients, families, and dedicated healthcare workers first. HB 2792 is that choice.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Robert M Sanders, CADC, CRM-II
Precinct Committee Person, House District 50