

February 18, 2025

House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care

In support of HB 3043

Chair Nosse, Vice Chairs Javadi and Nelson, and Members of the Committee:

Good afternoon, my name is Tamie Cline, and I am the President of the Oregon Nurses Association (ONA). ONA represents a diverse community of more than 21,000 nurses and health care professionals throughout Oregon. Together, we use our collective power to advocate for a more effective, affordable and accessible healthcare system; better working conditions for all health care professionals; and healthier communities.

As you've heard, HB 3043 updates and makes clarifications to the statutes governing the Health Professionals' Services Program, or HPSP. This bill specifically allows individuals to self-refer to the program and have a clean record after they have completed it. While there is testimony submitted on OLIS from ONA members that speak to the value of this program, I would like to highlight a few points.

The HPSP recognizes that skilled healthcare professionals are also people. By allowing nurses to work while receiving treatment, they can continue to support themselves and their families, without running the risk of losing their housing or being unable to put food on the table. Furthermore, research is clear that recovering from a mental health disorder or substance use disorder is more successful in community, with social support and accountability.¹ Workplaces are often an important piece of anyone's sense of community, particularly where they have supportive coworkers, and nurses are no exception. In sum: this program helps to maintain dignity in turbulent times and promotes sustainable recovery.

The HPSP is also good for the nursing workforce at large. Oregon struggles to retain experienced nurses, who are critical in keeping Oregonians healthy. This is partially because providing healthcare is difficult work: studies have long shown that nurses suffer from depression at almost twice the rate of individuals in other professions². Covid-19 has only worsened these challenges, with a 2021 meta-analysis finding that 22.1% of nurses reported moderate levels of anxiety, and 21.5% reported symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder.³ None of these challenges should bar

¹ Bjørlykhaug, K. I., Karlsson, B., Hesook, S. K., & Kleppe, L. C. (2021). Social support and recovery from mental health problems: a scoping review. *Nordic Social Work Research*, 12(5), 666–697.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/2156857X.2020.1868553>

² Brandford AA, Reed DB. Depression in Registered Nurses: A State of the Science. *Workplace Health & Safety*. 2016;64(10):488-511. doi:[10.1177/2165079916653415](https://doi.org/10.1177/2165079916653415)

³ Mazanec, S.R., Beam, P.H., Kloos, J.A., McClung, E.L, Park, S., DeLozier, S.J., Anthony, M.K., (January 31, 2023) "Stress, Anxiety, and Growth in Nurses During the COVID-19 Pandemic" *OJIN: The Online Journal of Issues in Nursing* Vol. 28, No. 1, Manuscript 4.

nurses from practicing when it is safe for them to do so. The HPSP is an important program that offers skilled professionals the support they need to do their jobs.

Please vote yes on HB 3043 to keep the HPSP updated and useful to as many nurses as possible. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments.

Sincerely,

Tamie Cline