

March 13, 2025

Senator Deb Patterson, Chair
Senator Cedric Hayden, Vice Chair
Senate Health Care Committee

RE: Support SB 24-1

Chair Patterson, Vice Chair Hayden and Members of the Senate Health Care Committee,

Thank you for having me today. For the record, my name is Dr. Cameron Wilson. I am a primary care physician at Columbia River Correctional Institution (CCRI) and South Fork Forest Camp (SFFC). I have worked at the DOC for over 3 years. I am also the president of our union local, AFSCME Local #200.

To give some background, I and my colleagues work for the DOC out of civic duty and to serve vulnerable patients. I believe healthcare is a right and we should do our best as a state and community to care for our most vulnerable members.

As to the bill, I support improving our staffing and having ratios put into law. The reason is we, the physicians, have not been able to get much progress on our staffing needs up to this point, and we greatly need the help of the legislature. Our patients need us.

To give some examples, at my institution I have had a hard time getting patients specialty care due to scheduling delays from poor scheduler staffing and lack of transport. I have had a patient wait in a wheelchair for 2 years since his hip replacement was approved in order to finally get the replacement. He then needed extensive physical therapy but that mostly didn't happen because of the transport limitations.

I have had a patient require an urgent stress test within a month to see if his stents were failing, but it took 9 months to ultimately get that stress test.

Also, a great area for improvement is the release process. I work at a release facility. Many patients have substance use disorder and are on treatment. I have had no access to release resources. We also don't track outcomes after release as far as I know. In medicine, transitions of care are the highest risk times for patients, and we need more communication and resources. As it is now, I have to come up with plans between myself and the patient and hope the patient can execute those plans without any help. I believe we could set up our patients and our communities for success by employing appropriate support staff to coordinate release needs and follow up with community resources. We could also track outcomes.

Please support the dash one amendments to SB 24. We need more medical professionals to support our patients.

Thank you for your time.

Cameron Wilson
AFSCME Local #200 President