

March 18, 2025

Oregon State Legislature
Senate Committee on Health Care
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301
Submitted electronically via OLIS

RE: SB 27 and SB 283, relating to the health care workforce

Chair Patterson and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of Oregon's 61 community hospitals and the patients they serve, the Hospital Association of Oregon supports SB 27 and SB 283 and their forthcoming amendments. We agree with the state's intent to invest in the current and future health care workforce. Health care is an anchor employer in Oregon, and it is our hope that these bills will build upon current investments to support the innovation needed to retain and recruit the health care workforce needed to care for Oregonians.

Hospitals care for people in their time of need, requiring staff to be available and prepared 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. To provide the best care to patients, families, and communities, hospitals need compassionate, skilled, trained, and dedicated workers at all levels of our workforce.

The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated and accelerated existing trends in our health care workforce, leading to critical workforce shortages. It will take a variety of ongoing strategies and policy measures as well as public-private partnerships to grow and sustain the health care workforce to meet the growing needs of Oregon's aging population.

Oregon Employment Department data shows strong job growth in the health care and social assistance sector in the past year, gaining more than 15,000 jobs from June 2023 to June 2024¹. Despite this growth, employers report experiencing vacancies and difficulties filling positions particularly in certain occupations and industries. Oregon health care and social assistance businesses had more than 18,200 job vacancies or accounted for almost one-third of all job openings in the state.² Based on this information, the Oregon Health Authority's biennial report on the needs of the health care workforce recommends that there be new and continued investments for initiatives and programs to recruit, train, diversify, and maintain the workforce.³

Previous legislative sessions have focused on short-term policies to retain and support today's workforce, but that was just a start. Continued long-term policy, investments, and reassessments, like those in the amendments for SB 27 and SB 283, bolster the pipeline of people who want to work in health care and support matching the capacity of higher-education, apprenticeships, and other training programs with the substantial demand for trained professionals. This will take public, private, local, and state—as well as labor and management—partnerships and innovative thinking to address Oregon's workforce challenges.

At its best, Oregon's health care system could be a model of collaboration and patient-centered care. Investments like SB 27 and SB 283 demonstrate to Oregon's communities that there is a focus on long-term solutions and access to care by creating an appropriate and stable health care workforce.

Sincerely,



Becky Hultberg
President and CEO
Hospital Association of Oregon

¹ Oregon's Health Care Workforce Needs Assessment 2025, January 2025, page 41,
<https://www.oregon.gov/oha/HPA/HP-HCW/Documents/2025-Health-Care-Workforce-Need-Assessment-report-final.pdf>

² State of Oregon Employment Department, Help Wanted in Oregon: Results from the 2024 Job Vacancy Survey, February 2025, slide 5
<https://www.qualityinfo.org/documents/20126/110695/Job+Vacancies+in+Oregon/cf7b034d-f4ce-555a-648a-931a67ba3b24?version=1.16>

³ Oregon's Health Care Workforce Needs Assessment 2025, January 2025, page 110-113,
<https://www.oregon.gov/oha/HPA/HP-HCW/Documents/2025-Health-Care-Workforce-Need-Assessment-report-final.pdf>



About the Hospital Association of Oregon

Founded in 1934, the Hospital Association of Oregon (HAO) is a mission-driven, nonprofit trade association representing Oregon's 61 hospitals. Together, hospitals are the sixth largest private employer statewide, employing more than 70,000 employees. Committed to fostering a stronger, safer, more equitable Oregon where all people have access to the high-quality care they need, the hospital association supports Oregon's hospitals so they can support their communities; educates government officials and the public on the state's health landscape and works collaboratively with policymakers, community based organizations and the health care community to build consensus on and advance health care policy benefiting the state's four million residents.



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