



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 Workforce Investments

Chair Patterson and Members of the Committee:

Samaritan Health Services (SHS) is a nonprofit regional health system offering care to Oregonians in Benton, Lincoln, Linn and portions of Marion and Polk counties. Driven by its mission of building healthier communities together, it brings together community hospitals, physician clinics and health insurance plans to serve more than 275,000 residents of the mid-Willamette Valley and central Oregon Coast. Samaritan supports the intent of SB 27 and the ensuing amendments.

In addition to being the operator of the SHS workforce training program and assisting our student clinical placement team, I sit on two regional workforce boards in our geographical footprint: both the Northwest Oregon Works and Chair of the Willamette Workforce Partnership. In these capacities, I am uniquely familiar with the healthcare workforce landscape, the unique problems we are facing, as well as various approaches to solving these problems.

There are many pinch-points in the current health care workforce training pipeline, and each needs to be addressed to truly repair our system. Most pressing are limited spaces in programs, cost barriers to training, insufficient number and distribution of training programs, dearth of educators, and limited clinical placements. Addressing our current and growing health care workforce shortage will require many tools, and SB 27 promises to provide extremely important tools to address some of these key obstacles.

Workforce training programs in health care a vital part of our state's talent-building portfolio. At Samaritan, we utilize both short-term training programs for CNA and Phlebotomy as well as registered apprenticeships for CMA and Surgery Technologist. These are earn-and-learn, on the job training opportunities that are tied to full-time, fully benefited positions. They represent a win-win-win for participants, the employer, and patients. Targeting high-need, hard to fill entry level positions in patient care, they stabilized our talent pipeline while eliminating barriers to entry for individuals who seek to enter this profession. These programs in turn have a positive down-stream effect on the rest of the system. For example, by running a regular CNA training program, we are not only alleviating the immediate need for additional CNAs, we are also having a positive effect on the future nursing talent pool as many CNAs later go on to pursue advancement in nursing careers and improving our staffing, allow us to see more patients in a timely manner.

While these programs are recognized as vital by employers, we cannot do it alone. Though key partnerships and support from the state, we are stronger and have a greater impact. This also sets trainees onto the path for a high-impact, meaningful career with the prospect for career growth.

Another often overlooked point in the training lifecycle that this bill will positively impact is clinical education. The prospect of funds to support the precepting work of staff during clinical education would be tremendously impactful. In nurse training, there is a limited number of clinical placements available. Schools and hospitals work incredibly hard to find every possible clinical placement for nursing students, but there are invariably a limited number of spots available. Taking on a student and training them is additional work for staff. Funding to support this precepting work could encourage more to take on this work and responsibility, which would increase the number of available clinical placements available. The ultimate result would be more students graduating with much needed nursing degrees.

I have seen the positive impact of workforce training programs in healthcare, have worked closely with various partners to create these programs, and have experienced the frustration that limited clinical placements for students can cause. **SB 27 promises to address several of these barriers to clinical placements and workforce development with targeted solutions** and I whole heartedly encourage you to support this legislation.

Sincerely,

Carrie Norris
Talent Development Program Manager
Samaritan Health Services