

Submitter: Miriam Barnes

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Health Care

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4074

As an Oregon nurse I strongly oppose House Bill 4074. This bill seeks to alter important and hard-won language around nurse staffing laws in Oregon. Any proposed staffing law alterations needs to unequivocally support the rights of our nurses to have safe patient ratios. And line (j) of Section 3 ORS 441.765 of the proposed bill which states "In a medical-surgical unit, a direct care registered nurse is assigned to no more than five patients," does NOT support safe staffing ratios for Oregon nurses. This bill would change med-surge nurse staffing ratios from 1:4 to 1:5 and is unacceptable. Our profession has extremely high rates of burn out and adding another patient to a nurse's patient load doesn't incrementally increase their workload it exponentially increases it.

If a nurse has to see 4 patients in an hour that means they have 15 minutes per patient to check vital signs, assess, give meds, provide comfort, coordinate care with other patient care teams, and likely several other patient care tasks. And during each of those 15 minute chunks they are thinking about the patient in front of them and the other 3 patients they need to check on.

If a nurse has 5 patients they have to see within an hour that means they have 12 minutes per patient to do all of that and 4 other patients to think about while they do. The mental fatigue and chance of making a mistake or missing something increases greatly. It's just plain unsafe and unsustainable. If we keep our nurses safe and staffed we keep them in the profession, which benefits everyone. Med-surge nurses are an essential backbone of our hospital system, don't undercut them.

I urge you to oppose House Bill 4074 and protect our Oregon nurses. Let's continue setting an example for safe staffing across the country.