

Submitter:

Matt Bailey

On Behalf Of:

Committee:

House Committee On Health Care

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

HB4074

I'm writing to ask you to oppose HB 4074 because it puts patients at risk and takes power away from the nurses who are actually at the bedside.

The 4:1 medical-surgical ratio didn't come out of nowhere. It exists because nurses know what it takes to care for patients safely. When one nurse is responsible for too many patients, things get missed. Call lights go unanswered longer. Medications are delayed. Subtle changes in a patient's condition don't get caught as early as they should. That's not because nurses don't care — it's because there are limits to what one person can safely do.

Hospitals have known for years that 4:1 staffing was coming. They had time to plan, to hire, to retain staff, and to adjust their budgets. Many didn't. Instead of being held accountable, HB 4074 lowers the bar and gives hospitals an easier way out. That sends a clear message: if hospitals wait long enough, the rules will change for them.

This bill also weakens the role of nurses in staffing decisions. Staffing committees only matter if nurses' voices carry real weight. HB 4074 shifts power back toward hospital administration and away from bedside nurses, even though nurses are the ones who see, every shift, what happens when staffing isn't safe. Decisions about patient care should not be driven by convenience or cost — they should be driven by clinical reality.

What worries me most is what this means long term. Nurses are already leaving the bedside because of unsafe workloads and burnout. Making ratios worse will push more experienced nurses out, not bring them back. That hurts patients, hospitals, and the entire healthcare system.

Safe staffing isn't a luxury. It's a basic patient safety issue. HB 4074 moves Oregon in the wrong direction, and I urge you to oppose it.

Thank you for taking the time to listen to the people who provide care every day.