Oregon House Votes to Support Nurses and Alleviate Workforce Challenges

House Bill 4003 B will provide short-term workforce supports and create more pathways for student nurses to enter the workforce

SALEM, Ore. - The Oregon House of Representatives today passed a bill to support nurses and take steps to alleviate the workforce crisis in Oregon hospitals. House Bill 4003 B increases the scope of emergency nursing licenses, gives nurses more access to mental health supports, and creates a nursing student program with licensure requirements.

“Nurses are critical to Oregon’s health care system, and we need to invest in their safety and well-being,” said Rep. Rachel Prusak (D-West Linn & Tualatin). “This bill will meet some of the immediate needs of our nurses and health care system, and it will build up our workforce for the future.”

The COVID-19 pandemic has increased stress and burnout for Oregon’s nurse workforce, exacerbating an existing shortage. Surveys have shown that large proportions of nurses are considering leaving the profession.

“This has been a devastating two years for nurses as we have been fighting COVID-19 on the front lines to save lives,” said Rep. Travis Nelson (D-Portland). “HB 4003 will make progress on short- and long-term solutions to address the nursing staff crisis in the state.”

HB 4003 B expands the scope of emergency licensure for nonresident nurses to retain nursing staff following the end of the public health emergency, and gives nurses access to the Oregon Wellness Program, which provides mental health support to Oregon’s health care workers. The bill also creates a new nurse internship license to create more opportunities for student nurses to enter the workforce.
The bill passed the House 57-0 and now moves to the Senate.

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