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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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