

Oregon State Board of Nursing
Position Statement: COVID-19

The global spread of COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus) is a rapidly evolving situation. This event has also resulted in confusing and conflicting information regarding transmission, healthcare worker precautions, high-risk categorizations, etc.

Each medical facility/organization decides for itself and its personnel whether to follow Oregon Health Authority (OHA) recommendations or recommendations issued by the World Health Organization (WHO) or the Center for Disease Control (CDC). The Board of Nursing has no jurisdiction over individual employers.

The Oregon State Board of Nursing has received reports that nurses are refusing to accept patient assignments unless their hospital/facility follows WHO or CDC guidelines rather than OHA guidelines regarding personal protective equipment (PPE).

In the Governor's declared State of Emergency authorization, OHA was tasked to provide the state response to COVID-19. Nurses cannot refuse an assignment **solely** because the employer is utilizing OHA guidelines rather than WHO or CDC guidelines.

All nurses and nursing assistants are entitled to keep themselves safe through appropriate use of PPE. The Board of Nursing does not expect nurses to work without PPE. The Nurse Practice Act will always support the ability of a nurse to refuse an assignment when they do not have the knowledge, skills, competencies, and abilities to safely accept it. Having PPE, or not having PPE, comes under the "abilities" section of the practice act.