



**Testimony in Support of SB 533 with -2 Amendments
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Chair Beyer and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of the Oregon Nurses Association and Nurse Practitioners of Oregon in support of SB 533 with the -2 Amendments.

SB 533 extends the time that Nurse Practitioners can treat injured workers from 90 days to 180 days, and the time that they can authorize time loss from 60 days to 180 days. Additionally, SB 533 -2 clarifies the ability of MCO-enrolled workers to treat on the job injuries with their provider of choice—whether a physician, Nurse Practitioner, or Chiropractic Physician—under certain circumstances through the “come-along” provision if that provider is not part of the MCO panel.

Nurse Practitioners of Oregon is a professional association for Oregon Nurse Practitioners, and part of the Oregon Nurses Association. NPO’s policy focus is to ensure that patients are able to see the provider of their choice, and to remove barriers to Nurse Practitioner practice to best enable Oregon’s Nurse Practitioners to care for their patients.

Oregon Nurse Practitioners have earned a broad scope of practice. Oregon NPs practice independently—without supervision of a physician—and provide comprehensive care to their patients. In addition to providing preventive care, Oregon Nurse Practitioners diagnose and treat patients, and prescribe and dispense medications. They practice in a variety of settings including clinics, hospitals, long term care, and community based settings.

Oregon has a well-documented primary care provider shortage, and in some areas of the state Nurse Practitioners are the only primary care providers.

In addition to a baccalaureate degree in Nursing (4 years), Nurse Practitioners are required to have a Master’s degree in Nursing (2-2.5 years), and many also earn a Doctorate of Nursing Practice, or DNP (1-4 years). At the Baccalaureate, Master’s, and Doctoral level, nursing and Nurse Practitioner students complete both didactic and clinical education.

The State of Oregon—through the Board of Nursing—requires all Nurse Practitioners to meet a practice requirement in order to maintain their license. Additionally, Oregon NPs complete 50 Continuing Education hours annually.

Nurse Practitioner training, licensure, and numerous studies on Nurse Practitioner outcomes show that Nurse Practitioners deliver high quality care to their patients.

Nurse Practitioner authority within the Workers Compensation system has varied over time, ranging from allowing Nurse Practitioners to participate as full providers with unrestricted authority, to imposing significant limits on the time that NPs are able to treat injured workers and authorize time loss.

Currently, the Workers Compensation system limits Nurse Practitioners to treating injured workers for 90 days before having to refer to a physician. Within Workers Compensation, Nurse

Practitioners can only authorize time loss for 60 days, which sometimes has the effect of requiring transfer to a physician even before the end of the 90 day timeline.

While these issues are all inconvenient from a provider standpoint, the larger issue is the unnecessary challenges that restrictions on provider authority pose for injured workers.

As part of the MLAC process, MLAC members have heard and received extensive testimony from Nurse Practitioners around the state sharing specific examples of patient injuries that haven't been resolved in the 90 day timeline, and the disruptions to continuity of care that this has caused when they have to transfer patients to a physician after 90 days of treatment.

Transfer to a physician can result in duplication of care when a patient has to build a relationship with a new provider, and can require delays in treatment—or travel—when a physician isn't quickly available nearby, as is the case in many parts of the state.

Current limits on Nurse Practitioner practice in the workers compensation system are also inconsistent with studies about Nurse Practitioner outcomes.

In 2005, the Department of Consumer and Business Services Workers' Compensation Division completed a study on Nurse Practitioners as Workers' Compensation providers. The study found no issues with Workers' Compensation care provided by Nurse Practitioners, and found that authorizing Nurse Practitioners to provide care within the Workers' Compensation system improved access to care.ⁱ

Additionally, decades of data have consistently shown that Nurse Practitioner outcomes are at least comparable to physician outcomes. The recent Institute of Medicine Report on the Future of Nursing analyzed data on Nurse Practitioner outcomes, and clearly and strongly recommended that Nurses, including Nurse Practitioners practice to the full extent of their training and education, and that barriers to Nurse Practitioner practice be removed.

Furthermore, a recent systematic review of published literature between 1990 and 2008 found that the outcomes for care provided by advanced practice nurses, including Nurse Practitioners are similar to and in some ways better than care provided by physicians alone. This review underscores that Nurse Practitioners provide effective and high-quality patient care.ⁱⁱ

Oregon Nurse Practitioners have historically demonstrated—both in and outside of the Workers' Compensation system—that they are capable providers and a key part of our health care system.

Limiting Nurse Practitioner involvement in the Workers' Compensation system doesn't serve patients well. ONA and NPO encourage your support of SB 533.

ⁱ Department of Consumer and Business Services (2006) Workers Compensation Division and Information Management Division: 2005-2006 HB 3669/ Nurse Practition Study, Final Report

ⁱⁱ Newhouse, Robin P. et al. (2011) Advanced Practice Nurse Outcomes 1990-2008: A Systematic Review. *Nursing Economic\$* (Vol 29/No. 5) 1-22. Retrieved from <https://www.nursingconomics.net/ce/2013/article3001021.pdf>.