



Senator Laurie Monnes Anderson
Senator Jeff Kruse
Senator Tim Knopp
Senator Chip Shields
Senator Elizabeth Steiner Hayward

May 9, 2012

Dear Chair Monnes-Anderson and members of the committee

My name is Robyn Dreibelbis and I am the current President of the Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons of Oregon. I would like to thank you for this opportunity to discuss our concerns regarding House Bill 2902.

I am testifying today to urge your consideration of alternatives to House Bill 2902-A.

I strongly support a compromise solution to HB 2902-A that would restore payments to nurse practitioners and allow a workgroup to develop a comprehensive plan to address Oregon's primary care workforce.

I applaud the efforts to strengthen the health care workforce in Oregon, but nothing in this bill prevents insurers from reducing reimbursement to physicians in order to meet the payment mandate, and I am concerned that this bill as written may negatively impact the primary care physician workforce in Oregon.

I understand the impetus for this bill was to address payment cuts that were made to certain nurse practitioners by commercial insurers. I fully support amendments to this bill that would restore payments to nurse practitioners and develop a workgroup to come together for a meaningful long-term policy that improves the primary care network across all practitioner groups. The -14 amendments are a win-win scenario and will allow for a comprehensive solution to address system inequities.

The hearts of osteopathic training programs involve taking a comprehensive view of all the aspects that affect one's health. Just as we need to consider the patient as a whole and not just a set of symptoms, we need to consider our health care system as a whole when considering system improvements.

I have heard this bill referred to as the nurse practitioner parity bill. Parity cannot be achieved by looking at one aspect (reimbursement), while ignoring others (length of training programs, costs differences in training, clinical experience, residency training requirements, costs of providing care/malpractice insurance, and others). A workgroup addressing these qualities can develop policy that takes into account the impacts to the entire primary care network.



As an osteopathic physician, amendments to this bill are especially important to me considering that osteopathic physicians have a strong history of serving in primary care fields. Historically, the majority of osteopathic students have continued on to serve in primary care fields. Unfortunately, the percent of students entering primary care specialties has been decreasing for a number of reasons. Undervaluing the importance of a strong primary care physician workforce will further push medical students into specialty fields.

I urge you to value Oregon's primary care physicians and support a compromise solution to HB 2902.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Robyn Dreibelbis, DO
President – Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons of Oregon



Osteopathic Physicians & Surgeons of Oregon

SUPPORT HB 2902-A14

The proposed amendments to HB 2902 afford payment reimbursement while protecting primary care physicians and specialists from unfair payment practices.

The current amendments for HB 2902 are a compromise for all stakeholders, providing payment reimbursement to NPs and PAs while continuing to incent primary care physicians in rural and underserved communities. This bill provides a temporary solution to the issue of reduced insurance reimbursement payments, while creating a work group that will bring all of the stakeholders to the table to find a long term, comprehensive solution.

Creates a pathway for NPs and PAs to reach full parity in rural & underserved communities.

The proposed amendments also protect primary care physicians and specialists by prohibiting insurers from reducing reimbursement payments in order to reach parity.

As a compromise bill, HB 2902 delivers immediate benefits to NPs and PAs while establishing a Task Force on access to Primary Care and Mental Health Care, made up of all stakeholders. The mission of the task force will be to craft comprehensive payment reform.

The proposed amendment includes a sunset date of July 1, 2015.

HB 2902-A14 is a compromise bill and a win-win for NPs and PAs as well as primary care physicians.

