



Testimony in Support of SB 325 A

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Joint Committee on Tax Credits

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Co-Chairs Burdick and Barnhart 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 Senate Bill 325 A.

Oregon's Nurse Practitioners (NPs) have earned a broad scope of practice. They practice independently without supervision of a physician, diagnose and treat illness, prescribe and dispense medication and manage the health care needs of their patients. Many of Oregon's NPs practice in rural parts of our state, and in some cases are the only providers in their community.

The rural health care provider tax credit is an essential recruiting and retention tool. Rural communities struggle to attract quality health care providers. Lack of health care providers in rural areas means that residents can't easily access the care they need when they need it, meaning that needed care can be delayed, and that a patient may be required to travel a considerable distance to see a provider.

In recognition of the tough economic times the state is facing, the proponents and many of the recipients of the rural provider tax credit came together to identify thoughtful changes that could be made to the program that would limit the cost while still maintaining the tremendous benefits of this program for Oregon's rural communities. To be eligible for the tax credit, SB 325 A requires providers to work an average of 20 hours per week in a qualifying area, and to remain open to the same percentage of Medicare and Medicaid patients as there are in their county.

Being a rural health care provider is a unique job and isn't for everyone. Provider recruitment and retention are critical issues in rural communities. The availability of the tax credit is one of the few "carrots" rural clinics have to offer when recruiting much needed providers. The tax credit helps off-set some of the financial burden of foregone wages for the provider and their family who may sacrifice other benefits to live and practice in rural Oregon.

Oregon's rural provider tax credit is a significant incentive to work in a rural area, and almost more importantly, to stay. Rural communities need every advantage they can get to recruit quality health care providers.

ONAA and NPO urge your support of Senate Bill 325 A.