
NORTHWEST STRATEGIES Inc.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Sandy Thiele-Cirka, Committee Administrator
Senate Committee on Health Care and Human Services

FROM: Len Bergstein

SUBJECT: SB 8 Background

DATE: January 29, 2013

Thank you and the Committee for scheduling a hearing on SB 8 on Monday February 4. I am representing ZoomCare, an Oregon business with a strong interest in seeing this measure pass. What follows is brief background information on the measure. Jack Dempsey, representing the Nurses has a strong interest in this bill and would appreciate being able to provide testimony. Please let me know if you want more info for the Committee.

The objective of SB 8 is to increase access to high quality, affordable primary healthcare utilizing the skills of Certified Nurse Practitioners or Certified Clinical Nurse Specialists to dispense prescription drugs.

SB 8 builds on the policy enacted during the last legislative session, authorizing physician assistants to dispense a limited formulary of basic, pre-packaged drugs [SB 1565]. That measure meant that patients could receive more convenient care from clinical teams of doctors and physician assistants and it gave pharmacists and the Board of Pharmacy an acknowledged, significant role in the delivery of primary care through modern clinical teams. Patient safety was ensured by close cooperation between the Oregon Medical Board and Board of Pharmacy. The implementation of that measure was smooth and has resulted in improved primary care.

If enacted, SB 8 would build on this reform by removing certain restrictions on Certified Nurse Practitioners and Certified Clinical Nurse Specialists to dispense prescription drugs throughout the state. Currently, although they are authorized to prescribe prescription drugs, they can only dispense in rural areas or areas without readily available access to pharmacy services. SB 8 would enhance the close cooperation between the Oregon Medical Board and the Board of Pharmacy to maximize patient safety. SB 8 would encourage the development of clinical teams consisting of doctors, physician assistants and nurse practitioners. The practical effect would be that patients would be able to receive these convenient, high quality primary healthcare services regardless of where they live. The use of clinical teams consisting of doctors, physician assistants and nurse practitioners would help drive down the costs of care without sacrificing the quality of care throughout Oregon.