



## OREGON OPTOMETRIC PHYSICIANS ASSOCIATION

February 9, 2015

TO: SENATE HEALTH CARE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

FROM: NICOLE RUSH, O.D., ADVOCACY COMMITTEE CHAIR, OREGON  
OPTOMETRIC PHYSICIANS ASSOCIATION

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 152

Madame Chairperson and Members of the Senate Health Care Committee, my name is Nicole Rush. I am an Optometric Physician from Bandon, Oregon. I am here representing the Oregon Optometric Physicians Association in support of Senate Bill 152 to ensure that Hydrocodone combination medications can, once again, be prescribed by optometric physicians for their patients.

Hydrocodone was recently rescheduled at the Federal Level by the DEA from a Schedule III narcotic to the more-restrictive Schedule II class.

Utilized by optometric physicians for ocular pain management, Hydrocodone Combination drugs have been part of our scope of practice since the formulary was introduced in 2002. The original formulary committee was comprised of two ophthalmologists, two optometric physicians and a pharmacist.

We understand and agree with the goal of the DEA that was set forth in October of 2014. Hydrocodone is the most widely prescribed and abused painkiller in the US. However, there have been no reported abuses by Optometric Physicians in Oregon, or in the nation, as our profession only prescribes these medications on rare occasions, in small quantities and with no refills.

If you have ever scratched your eye, you know that we are doing a huge disservice to our patients by not giving access to pain medication. I live in a small town of approximately 4,000 people and have a satellite clinic in another town of about 6,000 people. From either place, the closest Ophthalmologist is 30 miles away. My patient, in an immense amount of pain at that point, cannot see to get to another clinic 30 miles away.

Even if they have a driver, delaying proper treatment only causes more pain and suffering and added expense and inconvenience for the patient.

Optometric Physicians do not treat phantom pain, such as headaches or back pain. We only treat real things that we can diagnose during an examination of the eye.

Therefore, the Oregon Optometric Physicians Association is asking for your support of Senate Bill 152, which will simply re-authorize us to continue to use Hydrocodone-Combination medications, as we have been doing safely and responsibly for many years. We also ask that you amend the bill with the emergency clause so that we minimize the delay to our patients

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important issue. We would be glad to answer any questions the committee may have.