



Testimony in Support of HB 2678

February 16, 2015

Jenn Baker

Oregon Nurses Association

Chair Greenlick and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 2678 on behalf of the Oregon Nurses Association (ONA) and Nurse Practitioners of Oregon (NPO). NPO was established as an interest group within ONA in 1977 to enhance and at times maintain Oregon's progressive NP practice.

HB 2678 would allow Oregon's NPs to perform vasectomies. In Oregon, Nurse Practitioners have earned broad authority, practicing independently in both primary and specialty care. Nurse Practitioners diagnose and treat illness, prescribe and dispense medication, order and interpret tests and provide comprehensive care to their patients. With the proper training and education, Oregon's NPs are also permitted to perform chest tube placement, bedside incisions, and place arterial lines.

Vasectomies are more effective, safer, less invasive, and more affordable than permanent birth control options available for women. Unfortunately, they are underutilized in Oregon, in part because we do not currently have enough providers performing the procedure. Despite the fact that vasectomies fall within the scope of practice of a Nurse Practitioner, Oregon's Nurse Practitioners have been specifically prohibited by law from performing the procedure. HB 2678 removes this outdated prohibition and would increase access to this important procedure for Oregon families.

Although Oregon's Nurse Practitioners have been a proud national leader in Nurse Practitioner practice, Oregon is behind in this regard. Passage of HB 2678 would align Oregon with Washington State and Alaskan Nurse Practitioners, who have been performing vasectomies since at least 1996 when the U.S. Public Health Service Office of Population Affairs funded a vasectomy training project for NPs in those states. That same year—nearly 20 years ago, the National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health issued a position statement in support of NPs performing vasectomies. Nurse Practitioners who have been conducting this procedure in Washington State and Alaska have good outcomes, equally as good as their physician colleagues.

With appropriate education, training and if necessary, health system credentialing, Oregon's Nurse Practitioners can safely perform vasectomies, and help to meet the current demand for the procedure.

ONA and NPO urge your support of HB 2678.