

Please Support HB 2541
Rich App, RN
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Blood Donors Deserve Nursing Expertise

Chair Greenlick and Members of the Committee,

My name is Rich App. I am an RN, working in special collections at the American Red Cross. I first came to Oregon in 1991 as a traveling nurse. I was instantly impressed with Oregon's progressive public policies and the way those policies helped improve lives. I was impressed by Oregon's public beach access, recycling standards, and sensible land use policies and I soon made a decision to become an Oregonian. As a transplant to Oregon, I am extremely proud of the unique way Oregonians continue to work towards progress and set national trends. Oregon's citizens embrace being unique and are unafraid to think differently about how to best serve public needs.

As a nurse in the blood drive industry, I'm excited to see Oregon working to improve standards for donors and protect Oregon's blood supply with the introduction of House Bill 2541—ONA's Blood Drive Safety legislation. This legislation would require a licensed health care professional to be present on every blood drive operated in Oregon. It would make Oregon stand out from the rest of the states that are moving away from the use of nurses on blood drives.

In 2013, polling showed that Oregonians favor keeping nurses on blood drives by a wide margin. In fact, most donors are surprised to learn that the number of nurses on blood drives here in Oregon and across the country is decreasing.

The national trend moving away from the use of nurses on blood drive is happening because of changes in the blood banking industry. According to officials with the American Red Cross, since 2009, distribution of red blood cell products to hospitals has declined by 20 percent. Better blood management by doctors, evidence-based medicine, and new innovations have lowered demand for blood. Non-profits that run blood banking organizations have become more competitive and as a result, are making cuts to budgets, laying off staff and shifting towards the use of non-licensed personal. In Oregon, we have bucked that trend to some extent. Nurses represented by ONA have successfully negotiated to include nurses on blood drives in the last several contracts. ONA's contract with the American Red Cross requires at least one nurse on each blood drive.

Nurses are essential to blood and blood donor safety. We assist non-licensed staff with the donor assessment process. We use our professional experience and skill to help answer complicated donor acceptability criteria questions. And we are trained and able to respond to any unfortunate reactions that may occur during the blood donation process. Nurses are essential to helping donors recover safely.

Donors in Oregon trust that they will be cared for. Significant vasovagal or vasodepressor reactions (significant lowering of blood pressure) occur in 2-5% of whole blood donors.ⁱ Minor reactions are more common. Pallor, dizziness, sweating, hyperventilation, and nausea are the kinds of symptoms a nurse should be present to help manage. Oregon must continue to buck the national trend of eliminating

nurses from blood drives and pass House Bill 2541. Donors who step up to the plate to give the gift of life deserve quality nursing care when it is needed.

ⁱ "Rossi's Principles of Transfusion Medicine", 4th edition, Wiley Blackwell, 2009, p. 987.