



### **Testimony in Support of HB 2837**

March 10, 2015

House Committee on Transportation and Economic Development

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Oregon Nurses Association

Chair McKeown and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of the Oregon Nurses Association in support of House Bill 2837, which removes an unnecessary restriction on nurse practitioner practice in Oregon.

In addition to representing Oregon nurses, ONA is proud to work with hundreds of Oregon nurse practitioners (NPs) through Nurse Practitioners of Oregon, a professional association of Oregon NPs. We work to ensure that patients are able to see the provider of their choice, and to remove barriers to nurse practitioner practice to best enable NPs to care for their patients.

This bill would make a very simple change to Oregon statute and would allow NPs and physician assistants to sign safety belt exemption requests. Current law allows only a physician to sign this form. When a patient who needs a seat belt exemption sees a nurse practitioner as their health care provider, the patient must find a physician, who doesn't know the patient, to complete the request. This can require a patient to experience delays in care as well as additional travel. The change proposed by HB 2837 increases continuity of care for patients who need these exemptions and would decrease hassle and costs for both patients and providers.

Oregon nurse practitioners have earned a broad scope of practice. Oregon NPs practice independently—without a physician's supervision—and provide comprehensive care to their patients. In addition to providing preventive care, Oregon nurse practitioners diagnose and treat patients, and prescribe and dispense medications. They practice in a wide variety of settings including clinics, hospitals, long term care and community-based settings.

Oregon has a well-documented primary care provider shortage, and in some areas of the state nurse practitioners are the only primary care providers.

In addition to a Baccalaureate Degree in Nursing (4 years), nurse practitioners are required to have a Master's Degree in Nursing (2-2.5 years), and many also earn a Doctorate of Nursing Practice, or DNP (1-4 years). At the Baccalaureate, Master's, and Doctoral level, nursing and nurse practitioner students complete both didactic and clinical education.

The State of Oregon—through the Board of Nursing—requires all nurse practitioners to meet a practice requirement in order to maintain their license. Additionally, Oregon NPs complete 50 continuing education hours annually.

Numerous studies on nurse practitioner outcomes show that nurse practitioners deliver high quality care to their patients. Decades of data have consistently shown that nurse practitioner outcomes are

at least comparable to physician outcomes. The recent Institute of Medicine Report on the Future of Nursing analyzed data on nurse practitioner outcomes, and clearly and strongly recommended that nurses, including nurse practitioners practice to the full extent of their training and education, and that barriers to nurse practitioner practice be removed.

ONA supports HB 2837 because it removes an arbitrary barrier to practice for nurse practitioners and improves continuity of care and access to care for patients.

**ONA urges you to support HB 2837.**