



MEASURE: H/B 2837
EXHIBIT: 3
HOUSE TRANS & ECON DEVEL
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SUBMITTED BY: Rachel Stappler

March 11, 2015

Letter of Support for House bill 2837

Dear Chair McKeown and members of the committee,

The Oregon Society of Physician Assistants (OSPA) seeks to promote quality, cost effective, and accessible health care; to support the professional and personal development of Physician Assistants; and to advance the PA profession as well as the PA/MD team approach to health care.

With those goals in mind, OSPA supports House Bill 2837, which would allow physician assistants and well as nurse practitioners to sign exemptions for safety belts for medical reasons. Safety restraints may interfere with a medical device, such as a defibrillator, or the function of the device that could potentially damage it or render it useless.

PAs and NPs often serve as the primary care provider or point of contact for a patient. Current law allows only a physician to sign for a seatbelt exemption, which creates hassle and inconvenience for the patient, who must find a physician – who likely 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.

As a Physician Assistant at North Bend Medical Clinic in Coos Bay, my practice has a considerable cardiology overlap. Recently I encountered a patient who has a defibrillator and pacemaker and needed an automobile restraint waiver as this interfered with the medical device. The patient submitted the proper paperwork, signed by me, to ODOT.

Regrettably the letter was returned notifying me that PAs and NPs are not qualified to sign this form. While there are numerous instances in the practice of medicine where it is appropriate to require a physician co-signature, safety belt restraint waivers do not rise to that level. For my patient, using a seat belt could have had dire consequences, and current law required him to wait longer to get an exemption.

I urge this committee to support House Bill 2837, to remove an arbitrary barrier to providing timely patient care.

Sincerely,

Rachel Stappler, PA-C,
North Bend Medical Center, Coos Bay
President-Elect, Oregon Society of Physician Assistants