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Oregon Chapter, American College of Emergency Physicians (O.C.E.P)

Testimony before the Senate Committee on Human Services and Early Childhood

March 24, 2015

SB 840, Licensed Independent Practitioners

Chair Gelser and members of the committee, my name is Katy King and I'm here today representing OCEP, the Oregon Chapter of the American College of Emergency Physicians. OCEP is a medical society that has represented physicians specializing in emergency medicine since 1971 and its members share a commitment to improve emergency healthcare for all Oregonians.

OCEP supports SB 840. This bill allows Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioners (PMHNP) the ability to provide certain care and services in emergency departments and acute care inpatient psychiatric units for psychiatric patients.

Improved and appropriate care for people presenting to emergency departments in mental health crisis is a priority for OCEP. Our chapter was pleased to participate in the OAHHS workgroup to address these critical issues. This bill represents one of the recommendations of that workgroup.

Emergency department visits for psychiatric illness or addictions account for 6-9 percent of all ED visits. Allowing PMHNPs the ability to perform involuntary 2-person mental health holds, instead of limiting this function to physicians only, will help reduce wait time for patients and help free up emergency department beds for patients suffering from conditions such as heart attack or stroke.

In summary, this bill is good policy and will help facilitate treatment and care for people in mental health crisis. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.