



Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 920

April 6, 2015

Senate Health Care Committee

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Oregon Nurses Association

Chair Monnes Anderson and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of the Oregon Nurses Association in support of Senate Bill 920.

The Oregon Nurses Association (ONA) is Oregon's oldest and largest nursing union and professional association, and is proud to represent more than 13,000 registered nurses, advanced practice nurses and nursing students in Oregon. Oregon nurses make up the largest segment of Oregon's health care work force, and work in nearly every health care setting, from large hospitals to small local clinics, from corrections to school-based health centers and in public health.

ONA supports Senate Bill 920 because it will help prevent the overuse of antibiotics in farm animals. This overuse can result in antibiotic-resistant bacteria passing on to humans. As the term implies "antibiotic-resistant" bacteria are bacteria that have evolved to a point that they can no longer be effectively treated with antibiotics.

In 2004, the American Nurses Association (ANA) took a position supporting phasing out the use of antibiotics in agriculture for non-therapeutic purposes.

ANA found that the overuse of antibiotics in agriculture is one cause of antibiotic resistant bacteria. According to ANA, antibiotic resistance "threatens the ability of nurses to treat patients for bacterial infections successfully." This position is supported by a federal task force which found that without action to address the growing problem of antibiotic resistance "drug choices for the treatment of common infections will become increasingly limited and expensive—and in some cases nonexistent." (Interagency task force on antimicrobial resistance).

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has identified antibiotic resistance as a "top concern" and identified widespread use of antibiotics as the root of antibiotic resistance.

Finally, a March 2003 Institute of Medicine Report on microbial threats to health concluded that addressing antibiotic use in agriculture is a key to the solution and that "clearly, a decrease in antimicrobial use in human medicine alone will have little effect on the current

situation. Substantial efforts must be made to decrease inappropriate overuse in animals and agriculture as well.” (Institute of Medicine, Board on Global Health, 2003)

As nurses, our members know first-hand the value of antibiotics. They’ve seen antibiotics resolve infections and save lives.

In the United States, more antibiotics are used on livestock and poultry than on humans. In most cases these animals are not sick. When antibiotics are overused in livestock, antibiotic-resistant bacteria can be transmitted from farm animals to humans through animal food products, through produce that has been exposed to contaminated soil or water, and through the local environment. These bacteria can cause severe infections in humans and endanger the public’s health, as antibiotic overuse in farm animals also gives bacteria more opportunities to develop resistance to the antibiotics we need.

The antibiotics Baytril and Cipro are good examples of this. Baytril is put into an entire flock of chicken’s drinking water to treat diseases when only a few birds may be sick. Baytril’s sister drug, Cipro, is used in humans to fight anthrax, salmonellosis and campylobacteriosis, a common cause of diarrheal illnesses. Using data from 1999, the Food and Drug Administration estimated that thousands of people contracted a strain of campylobacteriosis that is resistant to Cipro and other similar drugs because of the use of Baytril in chicken’s drinking water.

This is the type of problem Senate Bill 920 would help reduce in Oregon.

ONA urges your support of Senate Bill 920.