

Matt Clark, RN  
May 6, 2015  
Senate Health Care Committee  
Support HB 2541A

Chair Monnes Anderson and members of the committee,

My name is Matt Clark and I have worked as a registered nurse at the American Red Cross Blood Services in Portland for over 15 years. I urge your support of HB 2541A.

I am incredibly proud of the work I do at the Red Cross. Over the years, many members of my family have been blood recipients. My work allows me the opportunity to give back to my family and my community by helping to protect the integrity of our blood supply and the safety of all donors.

Throughout my career, I have supervised staff and volunteers to ensure a safe, efficient blood drive, perform venipunctures, and assess volunteers for their ability to safely donate a viable and safe pint of blood, according to pre-set criteria.

One hundred percent safe blood is not a reality. All we can really do is make sure it is as safe as humanly possible. Having even one formally trained, licensed health care provider on-site at each blood drive keeps us much closer to that realization.

I remember a blood drive where I was the only nurse. I had just come back from a break when a co-worker approached me and told me she had concerns about a young man who had just been released from the screening process to donate blood.

The donor presented a severely smashed and cut thumb. He didn't think it was infected, nor did it have any obvious signs of infection, but, when compared to his other thumb it was obviously swollen to *twice its normal size*.

Three non-licensed staff plus the team supervisor that day had decided it was safe to let him donate. His thumb may not have had an infection growing inside, but I was not willing to leave any blood recipients health up to chance. The on-call physician was emphatically of the same opinion. This is just one example demonstrating how the presence of even one health professional on-site makes a difference.

In this scenario, my co-workers could have made the call to advice the on-call physician, but didn't understand the risks he presented to the blood supply. As nurses, we have education and training in dieses processes, pharmacology, and assessment skills. Nurses bring experience and expertise that blood collection organizations cannot teach during orientation.

Sometimes the nurses job is as simple as knowing when a call to a physician or for transport to a hospital is necessary, or not.

Not long ago, half of the staff on every blood drive was nurses. Then, only nurses were trusted to determine donor suitability. Now, the nurse's presence has been cut to the point where, sometimes, there are no licensed personnel at all. Please help us maintain at least our current level of safety.

Please support HB 2541A to ensure at least one licensed health care professional is on every blood drive in Oregon.