



May 18, 2015

TO: Rep. Mitch Greenlick, Chair
House Committee On Health Care
FR: Bob Joondeph, Executive Director
RE: SB 840A

Disability Rights Oregon (DRO) is Oregon's federally-funded Protection and Advocacy office that provides legal-based advocacy services to Oregonians with disabilities.

DRO has no objection to extending the authority to institute involuntary psychiatric holds and treatment to nurse practitioners as well as physicians. Under ORS Chapter 426, these treatments can include involuntary medication, application of mechanical restraints, seclusion and transfer: very significant and intrusive practices.

The original version of SB 840 could have been interpreted to grant these authorities to other medical professions. This possibility created the concern that these powers (which are exercised with good faith immunity) could be wielded by more professionals who are not certified, trained or experienced in providing psychiatric care and treatment.

As amended, the bill is tailored to extend civil commitment powers only to nurse practitioners in addition to physicians. To be clear, DRO would prefer that these powers be entrusted only to professionals with psychiatric training. But that is not the current law and, given the nature of modern medical practice, adding nurse practitioners seems reasonable.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony.