



## **Testimony in Support of House Bill 3343 A**

May 18, 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 House Bill 3343 A, which increases access to health care by requiring insurers to cover 12 months of prescription contraceptives at a time.

The Oregon Nurses Association 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 community-based public health.

House Bill 3343 A aligns with Oregon's health care goals which include increasing access to health care and decreasing barriers for patients. While patients are commonly prescribed 12 months of birth control at a time, many private insurers will only cover a 30 to 90 day prescription at a time. This requires patients to continually revisit pharmacies to refill their prescription, making it difficult to stay on prescribed medications, particularly medications which must be taken daily to ensure effectiveness.

Increasing patients' access to birth control can improve health and reduce the rate of unintended pregnancies. According to research from the Guttmacher Institute, a center that studies reproductive health, inconsistent use of contraceptives accounts for 41 percent of all unintended pregnancies. House Bill 3343 A can help reduce that rate by increasing patients' access to prescribed medications and reducing the odds of inconsistent use by removing barriers to care.

ONA urges your support of House Bill 3343 A to increase patients' access to health care.