



Information for Senate Committee on Education

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Chair Roblan, Vice-Chair Knopp and members of the Senate Committee on Education:

Thank you for this opportunity to provide information on nurses who work in a school setting in Oregon. As some background, the Oregon Center for Nursing (OCN) is a nonprofit organization with a mission to ensure a superior, well-prepared and diverse nursing workforce to meet the health and wellness needs of our communities. Our work centers on identifying issues critical to the nursing workforce, and then bringing together industry, education and nursing organizations to provide solutions. OCN's work is proactive, and allows leaders to make course corrections as needed to ensure Oregonians have access to the best possible health care.

Currently, there are an estimated 258 nurses who work in a school setting in Oregon, which is approximately 1% of all Oregon nurses. This is lower than the nationwide average of approximately 2.1%-2.8% of registered nurses employed as school nurses.

According to the National Association of School Nurses, only 45 percent of the nation's public schools have a full-time on-site nurse. Thirty percent have one who works part-time -- often dividing hours between multiple school buildings -- and 25 percent have no nurse at all. In 2014, the Oregon Department of Education reported on average one nurse serves 2,119 students in the state of Oregon.

School nurses treat any condition that affects the pediatric population, including acute illnesses (asthma, colds, flu, pneumonia, skin disorders, rashes), chronic conditions (types 1 and 2 diabetes, cardiac issues, orthopedic, endocrine, immune issues), obesity related concerns, and acute injuries (fractures, cuts, tissue injuries, concussions, pokes, bumps).

In addition, nurses in school settings create and manage student health plans. They treat medically fragile children with a wide set of complex health conditions that require specific nursing procedures to remain in school, such as tube feedings, positioning, ventilator management, tracheotomy care, etc. All student populations require medication management and oversight, and all ages have mental health issues, such as anxiety, depression, ADHD, social anxiety, and suicidal ideation. School nurses in Oregon

routinely delegate and train unlicensed assistive personnel health care procedures, such as emergency glucagon administration, asthma inhaler supervision, seizure management and medication, basic first aid, CPR, and more.

Prior nationwide research has been conducted to show the economic and health benefits accrued by school nurse services. There is also evidence that students are arriving to school with more health concerns, and sometimes more complex medical issues. However, there is a limited amount of information collected about Oregon school nurses. The Oregon Department of Education and the Oregon School Nurses Association collects some information on Oregon's school nurse workforce, but more rigorous study could help inform leaders and policy makers on solutions applicable to Oregon's children. It is our understanding a bill has been introduced in the 2015 session to explore further evaluation.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide information on school nurses in Oregon. We hope the above addresses some of the initial questions of the Committee, and we are happy to answer additional questions that may arise from the discussion.

Resources:

National Association of School Nurses, *Frequently Asked Questions*, accessed June 3, 2015 from <https://www.nasn.org/AboutNASN/FrequentlyAskedQuestions>.

Oregon Department of Education, 2014, *2014 Nursing Services in Oregon Public Schools*, accessed June 3, 2015 from <http://www.ode.state.or.us/groups/supportstaff/hklb/schoolnurses/2014schurseannualrpt.pdf>.

Vrabel, Ann, RN, MSN. Coordinator, Department of Health and Social Services, Multnomah Education Services District. June 2, 2015. Email communication.

Washington State Nurses Association, 2011, *Imperative Issues Affecting School Nurse Practice*, accessed June 3, 2015 from <http://www.wsna.org/practice/publications/documents/school%20nurse%20white%20paper%20-%20r2.pdf>.