

Seventy-Eighth Oregon Legislative Assembly - 2015 Regular Session
STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY
House Committee On Health Care

MEASURE: SB 152 A
CARRIER: Rep. Buehler

Fiscal: Has minimal fiscal impact

Revenue: No Revenue Impact

Action Date: 03/18/15

Action: Do Pass.

Meeting Dates: 03/18

Vote:

Yeas: 9 - Buehler, Clem, Greenlick, Hayden, Kennemer, Keny-Guyer, Lively, Nosse, Weidner

Prepared By: Sandy Thiele-Cirka, Committee Administrator

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Grants authority to practicing optometrists to prescribe Schedule II hydrocodone combination drugs. Declares an emergency, effective on passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Reclassification of hydrocodone in 2014
- Hydrocodone uses by optometrists
- National or local concern

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

Hydrocodone is a drug used to treat chronic or severe pain and also acts as an antitussive (cough suppressant). According to the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) hydrocodone is the most frequently prescribed opioid in the country. Effective October 2014, the DEA rescheduled hydrocodone combination products from a Schedule III controlled substance (a designation indicating potential for drug abuse), to a Schedule II controlled substance designating high potential for abuse that may lead to severe psychological or physical dependence. Prescriptions for Schedule II substances must be handwritten and cannot be refilled, although the practitioner may issue multiple prescriptions for up to a 90-day supply.

Optometrists use hydrocodone for post-operative pain, treating eye injuries and infections, and removing foreign bodies from the eye. Presently Oregon (ORS 683.010) excludes optometrists from prescribing certain drugs including Schedule II drugs or pharmaceutical agents not on the optometric non-topical formulary. According to the U.S. Department of Justice, there are 12 states with laws that prohibit optometrists from prescribing Schedule II drugs, but that make an exception for hydrocodone products.