



Senate Committee on Health Care
Chair Laurie Monnes Anderson
Vice-Chair Jeff Kruse
Senator Tim Knopp
Senator Elizabeth Steiner Hayward
Senator Chip Shields

February 2, 2016

Chair Monnes Anderson and members of the committee,

Thank you for considering Senate Bill 1503, which repeals the sunset on the “payment parity” law the legislature passed in 2013. The Oregon Society of Physician Assistants urges your support of this bill.

The Oregon Society of Physician Assistants (OSPA) seeks to promote quality, cost effective, and accessible health care; to support the professional and personal development of Physician Assistants; and to advance the PA profession as well as the PA/MD team approach to health care.

With those goals in mind, OSPA supported House Bill 2902 in 2013, and now urges the legislature to remove the sunset. Physician assistants who qualify for reimbursement parity as laid out in HB 2902 often work in rural and underserved areas and serve a critical primary care role in those communities. This bill will help them keep their doors open by ensuring their reimbursement rates won't be cut.

OSPA participated in the Joint Interim Task Force on Primary and Mental Health Care created by HB 2902. That group explored the many factors that go into the nation's complicated health care payment and reimbursement system, and heard from several experts about national and state-level efforts to reform the system to be more patient-centered and outcomes-based.

While OSPA acknowledges that the fee-for-service reimbursement model is inefficient, it is still the most common billing method in the commercial insurance market. We believe an explicit policy of reimbursement parity will no longer be needed when the medical community transitions away from fee-for-service health care, but since it is impossible to predict when the transition will be complete, we believe this legislation should stay in effect as long as the current payment system exists.

OSPA wants to thank committee members for your longstanding support of the physician assistant profession, and for your sincerity in seeking a solution to the current problem of inequitable reimbursement rates in primary care and mental health.

Thank you,

Rachel Stappler, PA-C
President, Oregon Society of Physician Assistants