

From the Desk of Representative Dan Rayfield



ONA and NPO Urge Your "YES" Vote on SB 1503 B

The Oregon Nurses Association and Nurse Practitioners of Oregon urge your "YES" vote on SB 1503 B. Nurse Practitioners (NPs) and Physician Assistants (PAs) play a critical role in delivering health care to patients in every corner of Oregon.

Oregon's NPs have earned a broad scope of practice and provide the same evaluation and management services, and **bill insurance companies using the same billing codes** as their physician colleagues. Decades' worth of research has consistently found that outcomes of patients treated by NPs are comparable, and in some cases better than outcomes of patients treated by physicians.

In the face of national health care reform and Oregon's move toward community based care that emphasizes primary and preventive services, our citizens are growing more and more reliant on NPs and PAs to provide high-quality, cost-effective care. **Oregon's payment parity law helps retain and grow this important workforce.**

Cuts in mental health and primary care reimbursement jeopardize patient access to care, the viability of provider-run small businesses and clinics that employ NPs and PAs, and undercut Oregon's stated goal of shifting to a health care system that focuses on primary and preventive care. When access to health care services is limited, patients tend to enter the system through the emergency room, after conditions have worsened, driving up costs for everyone.

The 2013 legislature passed HB 2902 to address this issue. This statute now requires insurers to reimburse NPs and PAs the same rate as physicians when they are providing the same primary care and mental health services, billing under the same codes, and using their own national provider number (NPI). A Department of Consumer and Business Services report found insurance companies implemented the law with ease.

Equitable reimbursement for these providers allows access to care for Oregonians, and ensures fair treatment to NP and PA-run small businesses, and clinics that employ NPs and PAs, and better aligns with Oregon's health care reform goals. This law is scheduled to sunset in 2018; SB 1503 B will keep this important policy intact.

ONA and NPO urge your support of SB 1503 B

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ONA is an affiliate of the American Nurses Association, National Federation of Nurses, AFT and AFL-CIO