



## **Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 743**

March 2, 2017

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 Senate Bill 743, which creates an age limit of 17 to purchase dextromethorphan without a prescription.

The Oregon Nurses Association is Oregon's oldest and largest nursing union and professional association and is proud to represent more than 14,000 registered nurses, advanced practice nurses and nursing students in Oregon. Nurses are keenly aware of the abuse of over-the-counter drugs, which is why we support SB 743 to require a prescription for dextromethorphan among minors.

Dextromethorphan (DXM) is a synthetic substance most commonly found in cough suppressants and expectorants. When the recommended dose is taken, DXM has few adverse side effects, and has a long history of safety and effectiveness.<sup>1</sup> However, within the past few years, reports of abuse of DXM have risen, particularly among minors. Recreational users intentionally exceed the suggested dose to experience a sense of heightened perceptual awareness, altered time perception, or visual hallucinations. This practice is particularly dangerous when combined with other drugs.

ONA has a history of working to limit the use of harmful drugs, including our support to require a written prescription for pseudoephedrine. SB 743 would make it significantly harder for minors to abuse DXM, which is why ONA supports the bill.

In addition to requiring a prescription for minors, we also encourage adding an educational component to raise greater public awareness on the risks of DXM abuse. According to the annual Monitoring the Future survey of 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders, abuse of dextromethorphan decreased by approximately 35% after the Consumer Health Care Products Association began a robust abuse mitigation campaign in conjunction with prescription age limits.<sup>2</sup>

ONA urges your support of SB 743 to limit the abuse of dextromethorphan among Oregon youths and encourages a greater public awareness effort on the issue of abuse.

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<sup>1</sup> Center for Substance Abuse Research <http://www.cesar.umd.edu/cesar/drugs/dxm.asp>

<sup>2</sup> Spangler, C. et al. Dextromethorphan: a case study on addressing abuse of a safe and effective drug. June 2016. <https://substanceabusepolicy.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s13011-016-0067-0>