



Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 785

March 16, 2017

Senate Committee on Health Care

Chris Hewitt

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 SB 785.

The Oregon Nurses Association (ONA) is Oregon's oldest and largest nursing union and professional association, and is proud to represent 15,000 registered nurses, and advanced practice nurses in our state. Oregon nurses make up the largest segment of Oregon's health care work force, and work in nearly every health care setting, from large hospitals to small local clinics, from corrections to school-based health centers and in public health.

ONA supports Senate Bill 785 because it will help prevent the overuse of antibiotics in farm animals. This overuse can result in antibiotic-resistant bacteria passing on to humans. As the term implies "antibiotic-resistant" bacteria are bacteria that have evolved to a point that they are no longer effectively treated with antibiotics.

In 2004, the American Nurses Association took a position supporting phasing out the use of antibiotics in agriculture for non-therapeutic purposes.

The ANA report found that the overuse of antibiotics in agriculture is one key cause of antibiotic resistance. Antibiotic resistance, reported ANA, "threatens the ability of nurses to treat patients for bacterial infections successfully." This position is supported by a federal task force which found that without action to address the growing problem of antibiotic resistance "drug choices for the treatment of common infections will become increasingly limited and expensive—and in some cases nonexistent." (Interagency task force on antimicrobial resistance).

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has identified antibiotic resistance as a "top concern" and identified that widespread use of antibiotics is the root of antibiotic resistance.

Lastly, a March 2003 Institute of Medicine Report on microbial threats to health concluded that addressing antibiotic use in agriculture is a key to the solution and that "clearly, a decrease in antimicrobial use in human medicine alone will have little effect on the current situation. Substantial efforts must be made to decrease inappropriate overuse in animals and agriculture as well." (Institute of Medicine, Board on Global Health, 2003)

As nurses, ONA members know first-hand the value of antibiotics, having seen antibiotics resolve infections and save the lives of patients.

However, across the country today, more antibiotics are used on livestock and poultry than on humans. In most cases these animals are not suffering from illness. When antibiotics are overused in livestock, antibiotic-resistant bacteria can be transmitted from farm animals to humans through animal food products, through produce that has been exposed to contaminated soil or water and through the

local environment. These bacteria can cause severe infections in humans and endanger the public's health, as antibiotic overuse in farm animals also gives bacteria more opportunities to develop resistance to the antibiotics we need.

The antibiotics Baytril and Cipro are good examples of this. Baytril is put into an entire flock of chicken's drinking water to treat diseases when only a few birds may be sick. Baytril's sister drug, Cipro, is used in humans to fight anthrax, salmonellosis and campylobacteriosis, a common cause of diarrheal illnesses. Using data from 1999, the Food and Drug Administration estimated that thousands of people contracted a strain of campylobacteriosis that is resistant to Cipro and other similar drugs because of the use of Baytril in chicken's drinking water.

This is the type of problem SB 785 would serve to address in Oregon by effectively clarifying that routine antibiotic use on farm animals is not acceptable regardless of indication.

ONA urges your support of SB 785.