



Testimony in Support of House Bill 3276

March 27, 2017

House Health Care Committee

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Oregon Nurses Association

Chair Greenlick and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of the Oregon Nurses Association in support of House Bill 3276 which would help ensure that all members of the public are receiving the adequate treatment they need to stay healthy and prevent the spread of disease.

The Oregon Nurses Association is Oregon's oldest and largest nursing union and professional association, and is proud to represent nearly 15,000 registered nurses, advanced practice nurses and nursing students in Oregon. 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 community-based public health.

With the recent meningitis outbreak at Oregon State University, we were reminded of just how important it is for health care providers to both proactively and reactively prevent and contain the spread of preventable diseases. In the crisis at OSU, Coordinated Care Organizations were among the publically funded insurance programs that denied coverage of out-of-network treatment to patients. Consequently, students had to choose between paying the increased out-of-pocket cost or not receiving a vaccination.

As a state, we have a duty to protect Oregonians against the spread of disease. There should be no barrier to patients receiving effective treatment, particularly during times of a public health epidemic. HB 3276 would allow local public health departments, as well as community groups and pharmaceutical partners to be able to provide timely and equitable treatments and vaccinations by ensuring that insurance companies and Coordinated Care Organizations cannot refuse reimbursement for these services. HB 3276 also puts in place pathways for local public health and community partners and providers to better coordinate services across county and city lines during an outbreak.

The baseline of public health is to support the wellness of all Oregonians. HB 3276 will help accomplish that by ensuring that as a state we provide effective treatment, particularly in times of crisis, to keep Oregonians healthy and safe. ONA urges your support of HB 3276 to better address the health needs of all Oregonians.