



April 3, 2017

TO: The Honorable Margaret Doherty, Chair
House Committee on Education

FROM: Jessica E.A. Duke, MPH, Manager Adolescent and School Health
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SUBJECT: House Bill 2223 (Related to School Nursing)

Chair Doherty and members of the committee; I am Jessica Duke, Manager of Adolescent and School Health within the Oregon Health Authority-Public Health Division. In Adolescent and School Health, we strive to support the health of all Oregon Youth through evidence-based practices and data-driven policies.

I am pleased to testify today and offer a public health perspective on House Bill 2223, which directs Oregon Department of Education (ODE) in collaboration with the State School Nursing Consultant, whose position is within Public Health Division Adolescent and School Health, to develop a statewide school nursing services program. By standards set both nationally and in state law, Oregon lacks the number of school nurses required to meet student health needs.

School nurses are vital to the population health of school-aged youth and support students so that they can be successful at school. The work of a school nurse includes public health functions of surveillance, chronic disease prevention, emergency preparedness and ongoing health education. Without adequate nursing services, school districts may be at increased liability trying to meet the health needs of students or having students' needs go completely unmet.

The need for school nurses in Oregon is great. Seventy nine out of the 197 Oregon school districts report no access to school nursing services. This equates to 29,734 unserved students. Oregon Department of Education reports that there is one school nurse for every 2,635 Oregon students. The recommended ratio is one school nurse for every 750 students.

The bill's directive of collaboration between Oregon Department of Education and the State School Nurse Consultant falls within the current scope of the State School Nurse Consultant as established by the legislature in 2015 (SB 698) (ORS 413.084). Development of an integrated school health services delivery model will necessitate additional support and partnership from other programs across Oregon Health Authority, including: school-based health centers, school-based Medicaid, school-based mental health, State Oral Health Program, Immunizations Program, and Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Prevention program.

Section 4 could be improved by striking the language "the Oregon Health Authority shall amend the state plan for medical assistance" and aligning the bill with provisions in Senate Bill 111 currently being considered in the Senate Education Committee. SB 111 would establish a pilot program to maximize schools ability and capacity to bill for Medicaid reimbursable services as currently permissible under Medicaid rules and regulations.

The programs outlined HB 2223 could aid schools in meeting the student to school nurse ratios set forth in Oregon Law, with the ultimate goal of improving the health and academic success of students.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I am available to answer any questions you might have regarding Public Health Divisions role in school nursing services. I can be contacted at jessica.duke@state.or.us or 971-673-0242.