



Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 274 A

April 25, 2017

House Higher Education and Workforce Development Committee
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Oregon Nurses Association

Chair Reardon and Members of the Committee,

The Oregon Nurses Association is proud to support Senate Bill 274 A. SB 274 would require Oregon colleges and universities that offer housing to provide students entering for the first time with information on vaccine-preventable diseases that commonly occur in individuals between the ages of 16 and 21. Thirty-four other states currently have an educational requirement like the one required in this bill, or a school entry mandate for ACIP recommended vaccines.

ONA supports policies that help patients make informed decisions about their health care, and SB 274 does just that. Increasing access to unbiased and medically accurate information about immunization helps decrease preventable diseases.

ONA members are particularly concerned about the recent cluster of meningococcal meningitis cases on college campuses, including isolated but deadly cases over the past few years, which demonstrate how important it is to help protect college students through vaccination and vaccine education. An entry educational requirement for all Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommended vaccines would be a strong step forward in student health and encouraging students to take control of their own health decisions.

Senate bill 274 would provide information and education about signs and symptoms of common diseases, how the diseases are transmitted, Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommendations for prevention, and any ACIP recommended vaccines. **SB 274 does NOT mandate vaccination**, nor does it specify the form in which this information must be presented or distributed to students and leaves the discretion entirely to the institution.

SB 274 would ensure that all students living on campus in higher education settings are informed about all ACIP recommended vaccines for their age group, including meningococcal vaccines. This is especially important for vaccinations for all strains of meningitis because college students in communal living situations are considered at risk populations by the CDC. Colleges and universities would retain the flexibility and discretion to determine the best way to provide this information.

Oregon's nurses hope that when presented with accurate information about vaccination, more students will choose to get vaccinated for diseases they may be at risk for, protecting not just themselves, but also their classmates, neighbors, and their community from preventable and potentially fatal diseases.

ONA urges your support of Senate Bill 274 A.