



May 1, 2017

**To:** House Health Care Committee  
**From:** Erin Cramer, PA-C, Chair of OSPA Government Relations Committee

**In favor of SB 964 – hospital privileges for physician assistants**

Chair Monnes Anderson and Members of the Committee,  
I am Erin Cramer, and I'm a physician assistant. I work at the Sublimity Medical Clinic in Sublimity, and for Santiam Hospital, in Stayton. I'm also the Government Affairs Chair for the Oregon Society of Physician Assistants, our professional association for PAs.

I am here in support of Senate Bill 964, which clarifies in statute that physician assistants may use hospitals for patient care. It would explicitly allow hospitals – at their discretion – to grant admitting privileges to PAs. It does not mandate or require hospitals to privilege any provider.

The bill only codifies what is already a current and long-standing practice – PAs all over the state have admitting privileges granted at the hospital's discretion. However, the statute and related Administrative Rules at the Health Authority are ambiguous.

Because of the ambiguity, CMS auditors recently told an Oregon hospital that only physicians and nurse practitioners may be given admitting privileges, since OAR 333-510-0010 specifically references only those two professions. This strict interpretation



runs counter to the common and long-standing practice in Oregon of hospitals granting admitting privileges to PAs. CMS requires a physician to co-sign admission orders created by PAs and nurse practitioners, but it can be after the fact. This permits hospitals to use their staff to their fullest potential and enhances patient care. This strict interpretation, which is not consistent with common practice, creates a greater burden on those responsible for patient care without a benefit to the patient. It has disrupted the ability of several clinics to admit patients needing hospital care in an expeditious and cost effective manner.

The hospital in question would resume the granting of admitting privileges to PAs once the issue is clarified. OSPA, mindful of the interests of patients, and our members who provide their care, urges your support of SB 964. Its passage would help prevent a future misunderstanding of ambiguous language. Thank you.