

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE TESTIMONY

Senator Laurie Monnes-Anderson, Chair

Senator Jeff Kruse, Vice Chair

Re: HB 2103, Permits licensed Nurse Practitioners to perform vasectomies.

Position: oppose

Dear Senators Monnes-Anderson, Kruse and other committee members:

As a physician and most importantly as a patient advocate, I oppose HB 2103 allowing nurse practitioners to perform vasectomies.

While vasectomies are a common procedure and often a preferred option for birth control, they are not an easy procedure to perform and are not without significant risk. From talking with urologists, my understanding is that most urology residents are not allowed to do vasectomies until at least their second year of training. As I hope you're aware, by their second year of training, a urology resident would have completed 4 years of college, 4 years of medical school and a one year surgical internship.

For a urologist to perform a vasectomy without supervision, they would have to complete a 5 year urology residency. So on top of those 9 years of training outlined above, they would train for another 4 years, working up to 80 hours a week with close clinical supervision.

As is, nurse practitioners generally do not receive much training in surgery. Nurse practitioners are also increasingly trained primarily in online schools (some of which could be described as diploma mills), and they have made no effort to standardize or regulate their training, as physicians were required to do after the Flexnor Report of 1910. I also am unaware of any strong evidence showing the NPs can safely perform vasectomies, and I'm unaware of this being a common procedure in other states for them to perform, meaning Oregon would be leading the way in exposing our citizens to increased risk. Frankly, Oregonians deserve more care and consideration for their health and their safety than this.

Nurse practitioners do play an important role in health care and can be excellent medical providers, but expanding their scope of practice into surgical procedures sets a dangerous precedent. As is, Oregon has already allowed them to practice with an essentially identical scope to primary care physicians and psychiatrists even though they again have significantly less training and essentially no standardization in their training.

Please protect the health of Oregonians and vote no on HB 2103.

Sincerely,

Mary E. Turner, MD