

HB 2103: Nurse Practitioner Vasectomy Practice

House Bill 2103 would permit Nurse Practitioners (NPs) to perform vasectomies, increasing access to care for patients and removing an arbitrary barrier to Nurse Practitioner practice in Oregon.

Nurse Practitioners have consistently proven their ability to deliver high quality care. Many studies show—including one conducted by the Institute of Medicine, when it comes to primary care, NPs can deliver care as well as or even better than physicians, and patients satisfaction scores are higher.¹ Nurse Practitioners tend to ask more questions than physicians, prescribe fewer medications, and have higher patient compliance rates.²

Oregon's NPs have long lead the country in NP practice, being the first to secure full authority to practice independently in 1975, prescribe medications in 1979, and most recently ensure payment parity for their work in 2015.

Nurse Practitioners perform many of the same tasks that physicians do as a matter of routine, and perform them just as well. Studies show NPs even match physicians on invasive procedures, like intubation, inserting arterial catheters, and biopsies.³ Expanding the number of procedures NPs are authorized to perform can improve health care delivery while reducing costs.⁴

Vasectomy is one of the most effective methods of birth control and is a low risk. Fewer than 2 percent of procedures result in complications, and only .2 percent of patients who undergo the procedure will experience a pregnancy in the first year.⁵ Modern advances in no-scalpel techniques make the procedure even safer and easier. Vasectomies are not qualitatively different from many other procedures NPs perform regularly. In fact, Nurse Practitioners compare well to their physician colleagues on other urology procedures, like ultrasound-guided prostate biopsy.⁶

Patients throughout the state—in rural and urban areas alike—are waiting up to three months for a vasectomy appointment. Allowing Nurse Practitioners who have completed the necessary education and training, provide documentation to support their competency, and obtain the necessary professional credentialing to join their physician and physician assistant colleagues in performing vasectomies will increase the workforce available to patients seeking this routine procedure.

The Oregon Nurses Association (ONA) is Oregon's oldest and largest professional association and labor union for Registered Nurses, and ONA is proud to represent over 14,000 Oregon nurses. ONA works to support policies that ensure the best working conditions for nurses, and the very best health care for the patients they serve.

¹ Stanik-Hutt, J et al. (2013). The Quality and Effectiveness of Care Provided by Nurse Practitioners.

² Newhouse, R et al. (2011). Advanced Practice Nurse Outcomes 1990 – 2008: A Systematic Review.

³ Institute of Medicine (2010). The Future of Nursing.

⁴ Eibner, E et al. (2009). Controlling Health Care Spending in Massachusetts: An Analysis of Options.

⁵ Urology Care Foundation. (2011). Vasectomy.

⁶ Henderson, A et al. (2004). Outcome analysis and patient satisfaction following octant transrectal ultrasound-guided prostate biopsy.

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