



Testimony in Support of HB 2644

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House Committee on Health Care

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Chair Greenlick and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of the Oregon Nurses Association in support of House Bill 2644, which allows newborns to form blood clots and stay healthy in the first weeks of life.

The Oregon Nurses Association is Oregon's oldest and largest nursing union and professional association, and is proud to represent more than 14,000 registered nurses, advanced practice nurses and nursing students in Oregon. Oregon nurses make up the largest segment of Oregon's health care work force, and work in nearly every health care setting, from large hospitals to small local clinics, from corrections to school-based health centers and in community-based public health.

Many of our public health nurses work with new mothers and babies and see first-hand the positive effects of Vitamin K injections. Vitamin K is vital in the first days of life to prevent Vitamin K deficiency bleeding (VKDB), a potentially fatal disease.

Currently, Oregon allows both shots and drops to deliver Vitamin K to newborns. However, the Vitamin K shot is significantly more effective in ensuring high levels of Vitamin K, both because the shot only needs to be administered once and because it is absorbed more easily and lasts longer. According to the Centers for Disease Control, infants who do not get the shot at birth are at 81 times greater risk for developing VKDB than infants who do receive the shot. Oregon is only one of six states that allows providers to elect an oral dose of vitamin K.

HB 2644 would make a very simple change to Oregon statute by ensuring that the Vitamin K shot is the first choice of providers. The bill does not make the injection mandatory as parents may still refuse it.

ONA supports HB 2644 because it will help ensure that medical providers administer the most effective procedure to guard against severe bleeding and blood loss in newborns.

ONA urges you to support HB 2644.