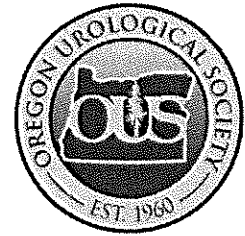


February 6, 2017

Representative Mitch Greenlick
Chair, House Committee on Health Care
Oregon State House of Representatives
900 Court St. NE
H-493
Salem, OR 97301



RE: HB 2103

Dear Chair Greenlick and Members of the Oregon House Committee on Healthcare:

The purpose of this letter is to urge you to reject HB 2103. A proposed bill will allow Nurse Practitioners to perform vasectomies.

My name is Eugene F. Fuchs. I am currently Professor of Urology at OHSU. Among my academic interest and research over the last 40 years has been various aspects of male reproduction. I have performed thousands of vasectomies during the course of my career and contributed to the education and training of over 80 urologist. I also serve as the uncompensated Director of Vasectomy Services at Planned Parenthood of Columbia Willamette,

The following comments are my opinions based on a thorough review of the published medical literature and my experience as the primary teacher of vasectomy at OHSU. These comments are not intended to represent the position of the OHSU administration or of Planned Parenthood of Columbia Willamette.

One of the driving forces behind this proposed statute change seems to be that there is a shortage of vasectomy providers in Oregon. Currently, there are approximately 140 Urologists throughout Oregon. Most but not all of these surgeons provide vasectomy services. There are also at least that many Family Physicians who provide vasectomies including some in the more remote rural areas where an Urologist might not be readily available. There is no shortage of vasectomy providers in Oregon.

There is a perception in the general public and with many medical professionals that a vasectomy is a simple complication free procedure that is 100% effective. This notion is simply not factual. Urologist know that this is the most difficult office procedure to master. There are short term complications that occur and generally cause pain and loss of work for several weeks in some cases. The procedure is not 100% effective with undesired pregnancies occurring in a small percentage of cases. The long term complication of post vasectomy pain that occurs in 10% or more of men remains problematic. The procedure is on the list of the most common urological procedures that results in medial legal action.

I reviewed the curriculum as published in the web site of over 20 Schools of Nursing, including OHSU, offering a masters-level or doctorate degree for nurse practitioners. Most of these sites had extensive listing of the academic course offered the students. None of these offers a course in surgical fundamentals. Thus, it appears that most if not all nurse practitioners complete education with no surgical training of any sort. The notion that a Nurse Practitioner with no previous surgical training can master a vasectomy and maintain the expertise with a sufficient case load is a naïve and dangerous concept this is not in the best interest of the general public.

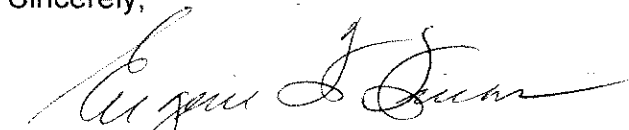
My extensive review of the medical literature failed to discover any reports of the results of vasectomies performed by Nurse Practitioners.

Currently, at OHSU, the Urology Residents are taught vasectomy after two years of intense surgical experience. These men and women are required to assist at several procedures being performed by an attending Urologist. They then must do additional cases with an attending Urologist acting as the assistant. Only then are they allowed to perform vasectomies solo but always with an attending Urologist immediately available. The typical resident will have experienced 20-30 procedures before being confident and competent. In addition, throughout the residency they will have had the opportunity to experience management of the immediate and long-term complications of vasectomy for men who are referred to OHSU.

I urge you to consider these comments and oppose HB 2103. Vasectomies should be performed only by trained physicians who are able to manage the immediate serious complications and the long-term potential problems resulting from the procedure. We all owe the public the guarantee that a vasectomy, the ultimate elective procedure, be performed by well-trained surgeons.

Please contact me should you need more information. I can be reached at 503-957-1621.

Sincerely,



Eugene Fuchs, M.D. FACS
Board Member, Oregon Urological Society
Director of Vasectomy Services at Planned Parenthood – Columbia Willamette
Professor of Urology, Oregon Health Sciences University