



Testimony on LC 45
June 22, 2020
Joint Interim Committee on The First Special Session of 2020
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Good afternoon CO-Chair Courtney, Co-Chair Kotek, and members of the committee. My name is Deborah Riddick. I am the Director of Government Relations for the Oregon Nurses Association (ONA). We represent 15,000 registered nurses throughout the state the Nurse Practitioners of Oregon. ONA and NPO support the many of the provisions outlined in LC 45 as necessary improvements to promote public health and that provide necessary worker protections. Specifically, we support 1) requirements for clearer infectious disease standard; 2) rules governing occupational exposure and protections; and 3) support to implement accurate and consistent demographic data collection.

Oregon OSHA Infectious Disease Standards

Our members support Section 46 (2), which would require the Department of Consumer and Business Services to adopt temporary rules establishing an emergency temporary infectious disease standards. Our workers and many other frontline workers have courageously adapted to the demands of COVID 19 without consistency of policies and practices. In doing so they have stood in harms way to meet the needs of Oregonians. They did this in risk of their own health and safety. It is time for the State to protect the workforce by providing emergency regulations that holds business and industry accountable for the reasonable protections to keep workers on the job. These assurances must be uniform to enable everyone to understand expectations and consequences for violations. In doing so, you will address a long overdue need expressed by our members throughout the state.

We also support the requirement under Section 47. (1) which would require the Department of Consumer and Business Services to adopt permanent infectious disease standards that address occupational exposure. It has been disheartening that our members are unable to look to the state for formal guidance on what is and is not a reasonable response to working conditions under COVID 19. Permanent standards would provide reassurance and protections that are currently lacking.

We also strongly support Section 48 that would require Oregon Health Authority to adopt rules regarding race and ethnicity data collection by health care providers. Our members agree that maintaining current demographic information is vital to make all systems more responsive to the communities they serve. We have all witnessed the disparities that were laid bare during the pandemic. We must do better for every Oregonian and understanding the populations we serve is vital to addressing their needs and ensuring that adequate resources are targeting those in greatest need. We also believe that better supports are needed to ensure that providers are better equipped to meet the mandates under current law. Apparently, there is a disconnect that is clear in the lack of demographic information that is currently being obtained.



We believe guidelines and support, including incentives to increase recording is needed. We would also urge quality improvement data obtained that identifies barriers that has led our current inconsistency. Being able to address the root causes would enable us to develop solutions and target communications that increase participation; we believe in addressing the root cause whenever possible. It would also help us identify ancillary system defects that might make provider compliance less than optimal.