



Testimony in Support of House Bill 3165

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House Committee on Health Care

Deborah Riddick

Good afternoon Chair Salinas, Vice Chairs Nosse and Hayden, 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 and the Nurse Practitioners of Oregon. The ONA supports HB 3165, which would provide planning grants to 10 school districts or education service districts to evaluate community needs for school-based health services.

It's been well-documented that unmet physical, emotional, and mental health needs negatively impact a student's ability to remain engaged and ready to learn. It has also been established that health status and educational success are interrelated; healthy students make better learners.

The Oregon Healthy Teens 2017 survey revealed that...

- 39% of 8th graders and 38% of 11th graders reported that they hadn't had a physical in more than 12 months.
- 8% of 8th graders and 12% of 11th graders rated their emotional and mental health as poor.
- 20% of 8th graders and 18% of 11th graders reported unmet physical needs; 19% of 8th graders and 22% of 11th graders reported unmet emotional and mental health needs.

It's important to note that because this data relies on self-reporting by students, it's likely to reflect an underreporting of actual need. Our students have spoken; we have a responsibility to listen.

The ONA supports HB 3165 as an appropriate legislative response to this troubling data. The grant allocation outlined in the bill would expand the network of services available in support of educational readiness. The flexibility afforded, by offering two options, empowers local communities to create a system of supports that aligns with both student need and district readiness. As a registered nurse, I can attest that physical, emotional, and mental health services for students are most effective when trusted relationships with providers exist. Co-locating education and health services offers a consistent and synergistic impact that normalizes treatment. Schools are the perfect infrastructural conduit to care, providing immediate intervention to students in crisis.

Oregon was recently ranked 48th in the nation in high school graduation rates. As you weigh competing budgetary priorities, it would be prudent to consider the educational, health, and long-term economic benefits of school-based health service expansion. Place matters and supporting HB 3165 and a budget that prioritizes school-based health services will demonstrate your commitment to our students, our communities, and the future of our great state.