



## **Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 721**

March 27, 2019

House Committee on Health Care

Deborah Riddick

Good afternoon Chair Monnes-Anderson, Vice Chair Linthicum and members of the committee. My name is Deborah Riddick JD RN. 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 SB 721, which would require coordinated care organization to reimburse cost of services provided by school-based health centers to members of coordinated care organization at rate paid to in-network providers.

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. Health status and educational success are social determinants of health, which is a CCO 2.0 strategic plan priority. Disappointingly, Oregon was recently ranked 42<sup>nd</sup> in the nation in health disparities and 48<sup>th</sup> in the nation in high school graduation rates. SB 721 honors our CCO 2.0 commitment by having the benefits follow the covered student lives, using the most cost-effective and patient-centered approach available.

In addition, the Oregon Healthy Teens 2017 survey revealed that...

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

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

The ONA supports SB 721 as an appropriate legislative response to this troubling data. The reimbursement required by the bill simply recognizes a covered network of services, provided by highly-qualified and licensed providers, to ensure that its members have access to care. The bill removes the barriers of time and distance typically associated with traditional, off-site care. 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.

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 reimbursement. Place matters and supporting SB 721 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.