June 25, 2020

Joint Committee on the First Special Session of 2020
President Peter Courtney, Co-Chair
Speaker Tina Kotek, Co-Chair
Leader Fred Girod, Co-Vice Chair
Leader Christine Drazan, Co-Vice Chair
Submitted to: J1SS.exhibits@oregonlegislature.gov

Support for -33 Amendments: Temporary waiver for Physician Assistant supervision requirements

Co-Chairs Courtney and Kotek, Co-Vice Chairs Girod and Drazan, and Committee members,

The Oregon Society of Physician Assistants (OSPA) urges the Committee to **adopt the -33 amendments to HB 4212**, which would add two items from LC 29, drafted in April, that would facilitate flexibility in hospital and clinic staffing during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The 2,000 licensed PAs in Oregon are trained to work with physicians in a team wherever they are needed. PAs can diagnose and prescribe, making them invaluable members of a health care team during a public health emergency. In normal circumstances, reassigning a PA would require certifying a new supervising physician and filing a new practice agreement – both time-consuming administrative activities. If Oregon were to experience a sudden surge in Coronavirus cases, there may not be enough time or bandwidth for employers to file the proper paperwork to temporarily reassign PAs where they are needed.

In summary, two statutory changes are necessary to ensure staffing flexibility during the pandemic:
  1. **Allow Physician Assistants who may serve at one or more locations to practice within their scope without requiring a practice agreement with a supervising physician at each site.**
  2. **Ensure telehealth access to out-of-state Physician Assistants.**

The -33 amendments are identical to what was in the final draft of the April special session legislation LC 29 (Sections 23-26 starting on page 13). Both changes are temporary and would sunset with the end of the Governor's emergency declaration.

Thank you for your consideration.
Sincerely,

Ben Johnson, PA-C, President of the Oregon Society of Physician Assistants