

To: House Committee on Education
From: Molly Blackburn, RN, MSN
Consulting Registered Nurse at Elementary Schools in Central OR
RE: Support for HB 2959

Chair Neron, Vice-Chairs Wright and Hudson and members of the committee—

My name is Molly Blackburn and I am here today as a Registered Nurse of 8 years, and I am here to express my support for House Bill 2959.

As a trained health professional in school, I am both licensed and practice within school systems and settings that can sometimes be in conflict with one another. We believe our students deserve the best possible educational journey at every turn and we know that the barriers that provide for these conflicting rules to our licensure are systemic, so we know the solutions will take long-term commitment and dedication.

Assignment Safety - our orientation process as school nurses is severely lacking. In a hospital setting, nurses often have a 10 week onboarding process with a nursing mentor and both nurses are paid during this process. Onboarding for new nurses in the school setting is an entirely different story. My supervisor is not allowed to hire a new nurse until the outgoing nurse has already left the district. New nurses must be trained by current nurses who are attempting to orient the new nurse while also accomplishing their normal daily tasks. Current nurses do not receive a stipend for training new nurses. My orientation was ONE DAY and then the nurse training me had to return to her normal duties. I believe many school nurses lack the knowledge to assess assignment safety, and might also lack the professional confidence to refuse an unsafe assignment at school. Furthermore school nurses do not uniformly use the OSNA Acuity Assessment Tool, or (like at our district) might even be discouraged from using it due to lack of support from admin. Lack of data surrounding student acuity in the school setting is a huge safety risk and liability. **How can we keep students safe if we do not complete an acuity assessment and ensure adequate nurse staffing at our schools?**

Scope of Practice - Oregon law ORS 336.201 in summary states that a *registered nurse* is responsible for coordinating the school nursing services provided to an individual student. However, the responsibilities of the *certified school nurse* support the health of a school community at large. For example:

- Serving as a case manager, liaison, and advocate
- Providing clinical consultation for students with health-related barriers to education
- Providing delegation/supervision to non-medical staff for continuity of care and emergency response
- Providing population-based health care

- Providing expert health-related policy consultation- From the OR School Nurse Manual from ODE and OHA (2020).

Currently in our district, all but one of the nurses hold the title, “Consulting Registered Nurse” rather than “School Nurse”. The reason is that Oregon law requires nurses to be TSPC certified or Nationally School Nurse Certified in order to use the title “School Nurse”. However in order to sit for the NBCSN exam, a nurse must have her Bachelors or Masters degree. We have 7 nurses in our district with their Associates degree and only 1 of our 20+ nurses is Nationally Certified. **All our nurses are completing the exact same school-wide health promotion job responsibilities regardless of level of education and National Certification status. This is problematic.** Our nurses are for the most part doing a fantastic job, but those without National Certification/TSPC licensure are 100% operating outside their scope of practice.

One clear concern expressed by members from all licensed professionals working in an education setting is the disconnect between requirements of licensure and the realities of practice in schools. That is why we need HB 2959, which will create a Task Force to examine the scope of practice for each type of licensed health professional in schools, establish criteria to help define when procedures are inconsistent with scope of practice, and provide recommendations for alignment.

Thank you for your time today and I encourage the committee to vote YES on HB 2959.

Molly Blackburn, RN, MSN
Consulting Registered Nurse in the school setting
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