



February 25, 2026

Chair and Members of the Senate Committee on Health Care,

My name is Heather Manus. I am a Registered Nurse and Founder of the Cannabis Nurses Network, a professional community of licensed nurses dedicated to evidence-based education, patient advocacy, and safe clinical integration of medical cannabis into nursing practice.

I respectfully submit this testimony in strong support of **HB 4142 A, Ryan's Law**.

Ryan's Law is fundamentally about compassionate, patient-centered care. Nurses are at the bedside 24 hours a day. We manage symptoms, educate families, coordinate care, and advocate for patient dignity — especially for those facing serious, chronic, and life-limiting illnesses. When patients ask about medical cannabis for pain, nausea, anxiety, appetite loss, or sleep disturbances, they deserve honest, informed clinical guidance — not silence driven by fear of professional discipline.

One provision in this bill has raised concern:

“Prohibits the Oregon State Board of Nursing from taking disciplinary action against a nurse for discussing the medical use of marijuana with a patient.”

It is important to clarify that this language does not expand nursing scope of practice. It does not authorize prescribing. It does not override federal law. It simply protects therapeutic communication between a nurse and a patient when cannabis use is legal under Oregon law.

This protection is fully consistent with national nursing standards.

The **American Nurses Association (ANA)** supports patients' safe and legal access to medical cannabis for symptom management and affirms that nurses should not face criminal or professional sanctions for engaging in informed discussions consistent with state law and the ANA Code of Ethics. The Code of Ethics requires nurses to advocate for patient autonomy, provide evidence-based education, and reduce suffering. Open dialogue about legal therapeutic options falls squarely within that duty.

Similarly, the **National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN)** published the *National Nursing Guidelines for Medical Marijuana*, recognizing that nurses must understand cannabis pharmacology, state laws, and clinical implications in order to provide safe care. National regulatory leadership is clear: nurses are expected to be informed and competent — not silenced.

Suppressing discussion does not enhance safety. It increases risk. Patients are already using cannabis. When nurses feel unable to discuss it openly, important issues such as drug interactions, side effects, dosing patterns, and documentation may go unaddressed. Protecting communication promotes transparency, risk mitigation, and coordinated care.

We also have implementation evidence to guide policy. A nurse-led quality improvement study conducted at UCLA evaluating Ryan's Law in California hospital settings found that when structured policies were developed allowing patients to use their own medical cannabis:

- Nurses reported improved patient symptom management, particularly for pain, anxiety, and sleep.
- Staff compliance with institutional protocols was high.
- No safety incidents were reported during the evaluation period.

This demonstrates that with thoughtful policy and nursing leadership, Ryan's Law can be implemented safely and effectively in clinical environments.

HB 4142 A aligns Oregon with:

- Compassionate, patient-centered healthcare principles
- National nursing ethics and regulatory guidance
- Evidence-informed implementation outcomes
- Safe, transparent clinical communication

As nurses, we are ethically obligated to reduce suffering, respect patient autonomy, and provide accurate health information. Protecting a nurse's right to discuss medical cannabis within legal boundaries strengthens patient safety and professional integrity.

On behalf of the Cannabis Nurses Network and the patients we serve, I respectfully urge the Senate Committee on Health Care to vote **yes** on HB 4142 A.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to the health and dignity of Oregonians.

Sincerely,
Heather Manus, RN