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Kate Brown, Governor



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Colt Gill

Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction

SB 16: Special Education Medical Statements
Senate Committee on Education
March 4, 2019

Good afternoon Chair Wagner, and members of the committee. For the record, I am Jan McComb with the Oregon Department of Education. I am here to ask for your support of SB 16, a housekeeping measure that cleans up and clarifies existing some special education language.

Oregon's special education law states that medical exams for the purpose of establishing special education eligibility must be performed by a licensed physician or an Oregon-licensed naturopathic physician. *Health assessments* may be performed by a licensed nurse or licensed nurse practitioner. In practice, there is no significant difference between a medical exam and a health exam and licensed physician assistants are qualified to perform such exams, as well.

Audiologists are not specified within the statutes and do not have the authority to issue audiological assessment information to school districts in order to establish special education eligibility in the categories of Hearing Impairment and DeafBlind. This has been a problem, as schools need the audiological information, but audiologists cannot now forward this information to schools.

SB 16 cleans up existing law and clarifies who may send medical reports to school districts. SB 16 does the following:

- Eliminates the term "health assessment."
- Adds nurse practitioners, and physician assistants to the list of medical professionals who may conduct a medical assessment (shifted over from health assessment).
- Allows naturopaths licensed in other states to perform exams, in addition to Oregon-licensed naturopaths to parallel the language for other medical professionals.
- Adds audiological assessments specifically, into the statutes.
- Specifies that licensed audiologists must perform hearing assessments.
- Clarifies that exam results must be reported by the health provider who performed the examination.

Under SB 16, physicians, naturopathic physicians, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, ophthalmologists, optometrists, and audiologists licensed to practice will issue information used as a part of an initial special education evaluation or reevaluation to consider a student's need for special education and related services.

Thank you for considering our bill.