



Testimony in Support of House Bill 2376

March 25, 2021

House Committee on Health Care

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Good afternoon Chair Prusak, Vice Chairs Salinas and Hayden, and members of the committee. My name is Deborah Riddick. I am the Director of Government Relations for the Oregon Nurses Association (ONA). We represent 15,000 registered nurses throughout the state, as well as our member organization, the Nurse Practitioners of Oregon. The ONA supports HB 2376, which would require that health care providers, who prescribe opioids, also offer a prescription for naloxone, or similar drug, and educational material under specified circumstances.

ONA stands in strong support of House Bill 2376. As you are aware, our nurse members play an important role in protecting Oregon patients by providing education about the risk of opioid overdose. And, despite our best efforts, we acknowledge that education alone is insufficient and that more needs to be done to combat the growing number of fatal overdoses in our state. The trends we are seeing in opioid overdose fatalities in Oregon during COVID-19 makes it clear that we must improve access, awareness, and availability of naloxone. Oregon's nurses understand that increasing access to potentially lifesaving opioid overdose reversal medicines such as naloxone is critical to our efforts to combat the opioid epidemic – a clear public health issue. Co-prescribing is a key tool that we can use to increase both education around and access to these medicines in a medical setting.

The House Committee on Health Care has a critical opportunity right now to support HB 2376, which will protect more at-risk patients and their loved ones from the fatal harms of opioid overdoses. By simply requiring prescribing providers who prescribe opioids to simultaneously offer a prescription for naloxone and educate their patients about their risk of an overdose Oregon's response becomes proactive, rather than reactive, when every critical second matters. By passing House Bill 2376, Oregon would join ten other states that have enacted co-prescribing measures. Access to naloxone in these states has notably increased as more health care professionals prescribed naloxone to patients, compared to states that had no legislation in place.

HB 2376 outlines a clear and proven approach to protect Oregonians from the fatal harms of opioid overdoses. Our nurses, prescribing providers, and impacted communities throughout the state urge you to vote YES on this critical bill that puts potentially lifesaving overdose reversal medication in the hands of more Oregonians.