

Senator Bill Hansell
900 Court St. NE, S-415
Salem, Oregon 97301
Cc via email: Sen.BillHansell@oregonlegislature.gov;

Re: SB 629

Dear Senate Committee on Healthcare,

My name is Brian Harris, and I am the Pharmacy Manager for Grande Ronde Hospital, located in the city of La Grande, Union County. We are a small, critical access hospital (CAH), which provides healthcare services to Union County, as well as Northeastern Oregon at large. We serve as the regional resource hospital for healthcare region 9.

Eighteen months ago, I was approached by the cities of Elgin and Union, both in Union County, about the possibility of providing pharmacy services to the residents of these rural communities. Both Elgin and Union had previously supported community pharmacies, but neither pharmacy remained solvent over time. The problem is that neither community has a base large enough to financially support a pharmacy on their own. While considering options, we identified a practice commonly referred to as 'Telepharmacy' as a potentially viable option.

Telepharmacy is, in most respects, a full service outpatient community pharmacy similar to those with which we are all familiar. The primary difference is that the pharmacist supervising the activities of this 'Telepharmacy' is physically at a different location. ALL dispensing, supervisory, and patient counseling functions are still executed, albeit through remote technology aids. Studies have shown that 'Telepharmacy' is a safe practice of pharmacy, and one which could lower the cost of maintaining a pharmacy in extremely rural locations. This option would increase the healthcare options of these communities, who currently go without.

I reached out to Senator Hansell's and Representative Barreto's offices to see what might be done legislatively to aid in bringing this pharmacy option to our great state of Oregon. SB 629 is the culmination of those initial efforts.

I support SB 629, and ask for your vote in passing this important bill.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Brian K Harris, RPh
Pharmacy Manager
Grande Ronde Hospital