



Testimony in Support of House Bill 2359

March 2, 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 2359, which would require health care providers, including coordinated care organizations, and companies providing health care interpreters to health care providers to use health care interpreters who are qualified or certified by Oregon Health Authority.

HB 2359's health care interpreter requirement, in our opinion, is an obvious solution to a problem that negatively impacts patient outcomes and cost containment. That patients are able to understand and communicate during a provider visit, in their primary language, is foundational to collaborative decision-making. If medication is appropriate, accurate translation services facilitate a critical care tenet: the right patient; the right medication; the right dose; the right route; the right time.

When patients are unable to understand their condition and treatment options due to a lack of translation, they are less likely to comply and more likely experience avoidable complications. This delay in treatment increases costs related to disease progression, wasted prescriptions, work-related absences, additional provider visits, or potential hospitalization. This requirement will facilitate care that is in alignment with the quality improvement that is an indispensable component of our State's health care access expansion and CCO 2.0 initiatives.

HB 2359's requirements address a discriminatory practice that leaves many Oregonians unprotected at a time when they are most vulnerable. If you can remember any illness that you have faced, which was so serious that it required a provider's intervention and medication, you can also remember what a relief it was to finally be able to regain your health. Now imagine, if that exam and instructions were in Swahili or Kaixana or Dumi. The thought is outrageous. Oregon residents, your constituents, deserve better. We should do better. You can do better.

To require translation services ensures that every patient receives the patient-centered care they deserve. It respects the provider-patient relationship. It empowers patients by providing equitable support. It helps to control costs and prevents waste. ONA supports HB 2359 because it aligns with our mission to support quality care and healthy communities in the State of Oregon; we hope it aligns with your vision for the state, as well, and that you will support and pass this bill.