



Support for SB 418A

April 26, 2023

To: Chair Holvey, Vice Chairs Elmer and Sosa, Members of the House Committee on Business and Labor

From: Russell Lum, Political Organizer, Oregon Nurses Association

Re: Support for Senate Bill 418A

Dear Chair Holvey, Vice Chairs Elmer and Sosa, and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony for Senate Bill 418A on behalf of the Oregon Nurses Association (ONA). ONA is a nurses union and professional association representing over 16,000 health care workers and providers, including registered nurses, advanced practice nurses, and allied health workers. Our members work in urban and rural hospitals, clinics, school-based health centers, home health care, and county health departments across Oregon.

ONA members, across the wide spectrum of care settings as discussed, bring people back to health. Nurses will always advocate for care that is effective, compassionate, equitable, and accessible.

In that vein, we want Oregon patients receiving care when they need it, rather than being caught in the bind of what necessary care — which in this case is workers' comp-approved — penalizes them in employee benefits banks.

Senate Bill 418A legislates that health-appointment time related to a worker's approved workers' comp claim be benefitted under temporary disability benefits, even if it is an under-four-hour appointment. Currently only four-hour-and-longer health appointments are eligible for the temporary disability benefit. This lack of coverage in present law leaves workers draining their sick time or avoiding appointments altogether, for something which should not, consistent with our workers' comp system's approach, be their fault for which they're having to make up the difference.

Passage of SB 418A means workers' comp benefit money steps in where currently workers are in this way overburdened. It will mean they attend more appointments and come to fuller recoveries. It will mean more holistic health for workers considering the paid-time-off hours available for their other serious needs.

Please join advocates and legislators in valuing this expanded benefits approach, so we arrive at an Oregon and an Oregon workforce with overall healthier and more just outcomes.

Sincerely,

Russell Lum