

SB 536 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Health Care

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Meeting Dates: 2/25, 3/11

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

The measure allows a licensed physician, physician associate, or nurse practitioner to be a medical examiner.

Detailed Summary:

Allows for a licensed physician associate or nurse practitioner to be a medical examiner. Requires physicians who serve as medical examiners to be licensed.

Fiscal impact: No fiscal impact

Revenue impact: No revenue impact

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

[House Bill 4003 \(2024\)](#) directed the Oregon State Police to study the causes and ways to address the shortage of medical examiners within Oregon and issue a report to the legislature ([State Medical Examiner System Analysis, 2024](#)). The report identified that medical examiner caseloads in Oregon are as much as twice the nationally recommended level. Per [ORS 146.003](#), medical examiners must be physicians. County medical examiners in Oregon are not forensic pathologists, are not required to receive forensic training background, and they do not perform autopsies. Physician associates and nurse practitioners are permitted to certify deaths that do not fall under medical examiner jurisdiction.

Senate Bill 2319 amends ORS 146 to permit licensed physicians, physician associates, or nurse practitioners to be medical examiners.