

SB 536 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Carrier: Sen. Patterson

Senate Committee On Health Care

Action Date: 03/11/25

Action: Do pass.

Vote: 5-0-0-0

Yeas: 5 - Campos, Hayden, Linthicum, Patterson, Reynolds

Fiscal: No fiscal impact

Revenue: No revenue impact

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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, and requires physicians who serve as medical examiners to be licensed.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Scope of practice.
- Impact of the measure.

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 536 allows physician associates and nurse practitioners to serve as medical examiners.