

Submitter: Karen Pyeatt

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2948

Written Testimony Template for HB 2948

Submitted to the Oregon House Committee on Behavioral Health and Healthcare
January 28th, 2025

Subject: Testimony in Support of House Bill 2948

Chair Nosse, Vice Chairs Javadi and Nelson, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Karen Pyeatt, and I am a registered nurse in the K-12 school setting in West Linn,

Oregon. I have been a nurse for 40 years, with 14 years dedicated to school nursing. I am

writing to express my strong support for HB 2948, which ensures that only a registered nurse

may supervise a nurse in a school setting concerning nursing practice.

As a district nurse, I play a critical role in ensuring the health, safety, and well-being of students

with diverse medical needs. The complexity of my work requires adherence to professional

nursing standards and clinical judgment. HB 2948 recognizes the importance of having

qualified supervision specific to nursing practice. This distinction is essential for the following reasons:

1. Clinical Expertise and Patient Safety

Nursing practice includes performing assessments, developing care plans, and managing medical emergencies. These tasks require clinical expertise that can only be

effectively evaluated and supervised by another registered nurse. An administrator or non-nursing supervisor may not have the medical knowledge necessary to provide meaningful oversight in these areas. Allowing registered nurses to supervise school nurses ensures that clinical practices align with the Oregon Nurse Practice Act (ORS 678.010).

2. Clear Distinction Between Nursing and Administrative Functions

HB 2948 clarifies the boundaries between clinical and non-clinical supervision.

Administrators are vital to supporting the broader functions of a school nurse, such as scheduling and policy adherence. However, when it comes to decisions about patient care, only a registered nurse possesses the training to provide appropriate guidance and

evaluation. This bill ensures that nurses are not placed in compromising situations

where

individuals evaluate their clinical judgment without a medical background.

3. Support for Professional Growth and Accountability

Registered nurses are uniquely qualified to mentor and guide other nurses in clinical settings, fostering professional growth while maintaining accountability. HB 2948 creates

a structure that empowers school nurses to perform their duties effectively, knowing they

are supported by peers who understand the profession's nuances.

4. Alignment with Best Practices in Healthcare

Healthcare settings outside of schools consistently rely on registered nurses to supervise other nurses. Extending this standard to the school environment ensures that

Oregon students receive high-quality nursing care and that the nurses providing this care

are supported by appropriate clinical oversight.

Personal Story:

Non-medical supervisors and administrators dictating nursing practice is the classic case of not

knowing what you don't know, and it is dangerous. Nurses are the experts, we are the critical

thinkers. We are knowledgeable in and committed to safe, equitable nursing practice. Having

worked as the only medical expert in my district, I have seen unsafe situations and am grateful

that my administration does defer to my clinical judgment and has taken corrective action at my

recommendation. I would not work in a district where the nurse was not supported and student

safety is compromised due to uninformed judgement calls by non-medical staff, or worse,

compromised to "make it easier." We are duty-bound to our licensure and the Nurse Practice

Act, and I would never put myself in a situation where I had to choose between the safety of a

child and keeping my job. The more nurses are supported in our schools, the more we can do

for our schools and students.

In conclusion, HB 2948 provides critical safeguards for students and the nurses who work to support them in schools.

Thank you, Karen Pyeatt RN BSN NCSN