

HANNAH'S LAW

PROBLEM

School nurses bridge healthcare and education. They practice in a setting with colleagues who are not in clinical healthcare practice. School nurses in the majority of districts in Oregon are supervised by non-nurses who are not qualified to evaluate clinical nursing practice. This can lead to dangerous health outcomes for students and violates the Oregon Nurse Practice Act.

“When administrators without any medical training make decisions on patient care, it puts students at risk. When they allow principals to demand that components of a care plan are changed, it puts students at risk. When they support the removal of a nurse from a school with a high number of students with complex medical conditions, it puts students at risk. Allowing administrators to make clinical nursing decisions is not only a violation of the nurse practice act; it puts students' lives at risk. It is so important that nurses be allowed to utilize their professional expertise to dictate care. You wouldn't want a teacher dictating your care after a stroke in the hospital, would you? Then why allow it in a school?”

— Quote from Oregon School Nurse

SOLUTION: HB 2948

This bill ensures that only registered nurses are authorized to supervise, assign tasks to, or evaluate licensed nurses in school settings when it pertains to nursing practice. However, it allows non-nurses to supervise nurses in school settings for duties or responsibilities unrelated to nursing practice. This bill applies to all nurses in school settings and not just those who are certified. WA state has similar legislation for school nurses.



QUOTES FROM SCHOOL NURSES

"After meeting with a family (without the nurse present), the principal and parent agreed that an adolescent would carry and self-administer a controlled substance medication in school. The principal instructed me to support that intervention, directing my practice in that way could be potentially life-threatening for the student. Too often educators, who are not nurses, make dangerous clinical recommendations outside of their scope of practice."

-Oregon School Nurse

"A principal directed me to change a student's health plan (he wanted me to remove the requirement for emergency administration of glucagon to a student with severe hypoglycemia) because he did not want to be required to send trained staff on field trips."

-Oregon School Nurse

"An administrator in my district routinely makes decisions about staffing for field trips, regardless of my nursing judgment about the needs of students and legal requirements for the provision of services."

-Oregon School Nurse

"My administrator required me to manage the airway of a nursing dependent student, because the 1:1 nurse was absent, in addition to my own caseload. I managed suctioning of a tracheostomy for the student while I was being interrupted to manage the care for several other medically fragile students."

-Oregon School Nurse

Quotes from school nurses were acquired with the promise of ambiguity. Many school nurses expressed worry of retaliation.