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On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2948

Submitted to the Oregon House Committee on Behavior Health and Health Care
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Subject: Testimony in Support of House Bill 2948

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

My name is Erica Jacobson, and I am a registered nurse for three K-12 school districts in rural Lane County, Oregon. I have been an ER nurse for 12 years, and recently moved into a school nursing role last year out of a passion for helping kids and families thrive in their home community, and helping fill a critical need for school nurses.

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 school 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.

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.

Thank you for considering my testimony. As I have been navigating my way in this unique setting as a new school nurse, I continue to see a need for these proposed changes. I am fortunate that my school districts have been more than responsive to my professional expertise and guidance, but I have to say I have come across MANY school nurses who do not share that experience. They have expressed feeling trapped within expectations and duties that are not safe for students, that are not evidence-based, and frankly that may jeopardize their nursing license. HB 2948 will greatly enhance the standards and professionalism of Oregon's school nurse field, which will help recruit and keep more skilled nurses, and ultimately (and most importantly) allow more kids and families to thrive in their communities.

Respectfully,

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