

Submitter: Denice Bracken
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1174

Denice Bracken, BSW, MScN (CNS Candidate)
Beaverton, OR

Position: Support for SB 1174 – Licensing Certified Nutrition Specialists in Oregon

Dear Honorable Senate Committee,

I am writing to urge your support for SB 1174, which would hope to establish licensure for Certified Nutrition Specialists (CNS) in the state of Oregon. As a social worker, nutritionist, and engaged member of our integrative healthcare community here in Oregon, I have seen firsthand how evidence-based nutrition care is a critical component of public health, chronic disease management, and overall wellness. Passing SB 1174 will ensure that highly trained nutrition professionals can practice to the full scope of their expertise, improving access to quality nutrition care for thousands of Oregonians all across the state.

Currently, Oregon has limits on the ability and protections of Certified Nutrition Specialists to provide medical nutrition therapy in many settings, limiting access to qualified nutrition professionals and creating unnecessary barriers to care for those seeking support for their health. The CNS credential requires rigorous academic coursework in nutrition and dietetics, supervised clinical practice, and passage of a national board exam, ensuring that CNS practitioners meet high professional standards. The CNS licensure has long been evidence based and has required a Master's level rigor of academic requirement for several years with 1,000 hours of supervision.

Expanding licensure to include CNS professionals will:

1. Increase access to qualified nutrition professionals for individuals managing conditions like diabetes, heart disease, gastrointestinal disorders, eating disorders, and autoimmune conditions.
2. Improve healthcare outcomes by allowing CNS practitioners to work alongside other healthcare providers to deliver comprehensive, integrative nutrition care.
3. Address healthcare disparities by expanding the pool of licensed professionals who can serve rural and underserved communities.
4. Support consumer protection by ensuring that only qualified individuals provide medical nutrition therapy, reducing the risk of misinformation and harm.

Food is at the heart of our cultures and health. With the growing prevalence of

chronic disease and the increasing demand for preventive and therapeutic nutrition services, Oregon must take proactive steps to expand its healthcare workforce. Recognizing CNS licensure will enhance the state's ability to provide safe, evidence-based nutrition care and empower individuals to make informed health choices and find a safe balance with food.

I strongly urge you to vote in favor of SB 1174 and support the inclusion of Certified Nutrition Specialists in Oregon's licensure framework.

Thank you,

Denice Bracken, BSW, MScN