

Subject: Testimony in Support of House Bill 2948

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

My name is Jennifer Tyree, and I am a registered nurse in the K-12 Salem Keizer school district in Salem-Keizer, Oregon. I have been a nurse for 15 years, with 10 years dedicated to school nursing with a national certification in 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 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. 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 (Optional):

In a prior school district, where the supervisor was not a nurse, I was gathering a report about the four schools and 3,500 students I would be responsible for supporting. I learned that 350 students listed as having chronic or complex health needs had only 15 outdated health management plans (HMPs). Many of the physician directed school orders were also outdated by years. None of the ODE/OHA trainings, delegations, and medical support training (i.e. medication, epi-pen and glucagon administration, emergency seizure medication, g-tube support, etc) for staff had been documented nor tracked. All of these students should have had HMPs, thus all 350 students were at increased risk because staff did not know what was needed to support these students. Such as knowing that a student has asthma and what signs symptoms would indicate they needed to use an inhaler so they can breathe and prevent asthma attacks, which put those students at risk for increased hospital and ER visits. At least 20 students had daily life-threatening health conditions, with severe allergies and diabetes and there was no confirmed plan for who, when, and how to give epi-pens or glucagon, respectively, to prevent death.

In conclusion, HB 2948 provides critical safeguards for students and school nurses by ensuring clinical supervision is conducted by those with the appropriate training and expertise. I urge you to support this bill and help Oregon schools continue to provide safe, effective, and professional nursing care to our students.

Thank you for considering my testimony. I am happy to answer any questions or provide additional insights based on my experience.

Respectfully,

Jennifer Tyree, BSN, RN, NCSN
School Health Nurse
Salem-Keizer School District