

Submitter: Jennifer Novack
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2948

Dear Members of the Legislative Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 2948 (HB 2948), which seeks to clarify the scope of nursing practice in school settings and ensure that nursing decisions are made by licensed professionals with the appropriate clinical expertise. As a school nurse working in Multnomah County, I have firsthand experience with the critical importance of having a clear and well-defined nursing role, especially in school environments where students with complex health needs require careful and knowledgeable care.

One of the most vital aspects of this bill is the provision that only registered nurses (RNs) may supervise, evaluate, or assign responsibilities to other nurses in clinical practice. In my role, I often find myself navigating situations where my clinical judgment is questioned by individuals who may not have the nursing expertise to understand the full scope of a student's health needs. For example, there was an incident where a student, after a confrontation with a classmate, became unresponsive and "flopped to the ground" during a conversation with the school principal. I performed a nursing assessment, determining that the student was not experiencing a seizure or any other health emergency but was otherwise safe. The student immediately became responsive when their parent arrived, and further evaluation by a healthcare provider confirmed no health concerns. However, the principal questioned my assessment, repeatedly asserting that it was a seizure. In this situation, it was my nursing supervisor who stepped in to support my clinical judgment and ensure that the nursing decision made was respected, reinforcing the critical need for licensed nursing professionals to be in charge of clinical decisions.

In addition, my nursing supervisor has been a key resource for me when issues arise regarding health policies and procedures. For instance, when non-nurse administrators and teachers have failed to follow through with ensuring that unlicensed assistive personnel (UAPs) receive the required training to care for students with health conditions, my nursing supervisor has intervened to ensure students' safety and compliance with regulations. This is especially important in situations like field trips, where there may be resistance from school staff to be trained as a UAP. Without the support of a nursing supervisor, these critical issues might not be addressed, which could lead to dangerous situations for students.

I believe that HB 2948 will help protect students' health by ensuring that clinical

decisions in schools are made by professionals who are trained to do so. It will also reduce the legal risks faced by school districts by ensuring that nursing staff are properly supported and their professional expertise is respected. The bill provides clarity regarding the scope of nursing practice, ensuring that non-nurse administrators are not put in a position where they could be responsible for clinical decisions, which could potentially endanger student health.

In conclusion, I strongly support HB 2948 and encourage you to pass this bill to improve the safety and quality of nursing care provided in Oregon's schools. As a school nurse, I know how crucial it is for clinical decisions to be made by licensed professionals, and this bill will strengthen the foundation of care provided to students across the state.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Novack, RN, BSN, NCSN
Multnomah County School Nurse