



Increase Rural Access to Care for Injured Workers

On behalf of Oregon's business community, we urge you to retain Sections 49–65 of HB 4040, the “Workers’ Compensation Reclassification of Physician Associates and Nurse Practitioners” provisions which have been supported by MLAC through a vote on 2/5/26.

These sections modernize Oregon's workers’ compensation framework to better reflect how care is actually delivered across the state, especially in rural and frontier communities. In many rural areas, physician associates (PAs) and nurse practitioners (NPs) are the primary point of care for working Oregonians, including the trades, natural resource sectors, manufacturing, transportation, and construction.

When injured workers cannot promptly access an attending provider within their community, the result is predictable: longer wait times, delayed treatment, more time-loss, more travel time, and higher claim costs. Those impacts land on everyone: workers and families, small employers who need employees back on the job, and the overall system that depends on timely, high-quality care to reduce disability duration.

By ensuring PAs and NPs can appropriately serve in workers’ compensation cases as attending physicians within the statutory framework, Sections 49–65 will:

- Increase access points for injured workers, particularly where physician shortages are most acute
- Reduce delays in diagnosis, treatment, referrals, and work status determinations that drive up time-loss
- Support faster, safer return-to-work outcomes, helping employers maintain continuity of operations
- Reduce administrative friction by aligning workers’ compensation statutes with today’s care teams and common practice patterns
- Keep care local, reducing unnecessary travel burdens and missed work hours for rural workers and small businesses

Oregon's workers’ compensation system works best when it is built around two priorities:

- 1) Timely access to appropriate care
- 2) Clear pathways back to work

Sections 49–65 advance both, particularly for rural communities where options are limited and delays are costly.

For these reasons, we respectfully request that you retain Sections 49–65 in HB 4040 to ensure rural workers can receive timely care close to home and to strengthen Oregon's ability to keep its workforce healthy, productive, and employed.

For more information, please reach out to Kirsten Adams from AGC at 503-990-2262 or Amanda Sullivan-Astor from AOL at 503-983-4017