



Oregon Nurses Association 2009 Legislative Agenda

Universal health care continues to be a top priority for the members of the Oregon Nurses Association. Using some of the proposals from the Oregon Health Fund Board, which mirror both ONA and ANA policy priorities, and the various revenue options available, Oregonians will take a critical first step in reforming our health delivery system and providing additional coverage for many uninsured citizens.

The nursing workforce required to support our state's expanding health care needs will also continue to be our focus. Creating an innovative program that adds additional nursing faculty to support the expanded number of nursing students and stem the tide of pending retirements will be a crucial achievement.

Our Members' Top Priorities

The Oregon Nurses Association's Cabinet on Health Policy identified these issues and the following list of priorities for our members:

- **Health Care Access and Reform (HB 2009):** To improve health care outcomes, we need to reform our health care delivery system to emphasize and reward primary and preventative care. Establishing an Oregon Health Authority to oversee reform and consolidate state oversight will streamline systems and eliminate duplication of work. In addition, we need to maximize the amount of federal match dollars to expand coverage of uninsured Oregonians. One way to do this is with the proposed provider tax.
- **Support for Additional Nursing Faculty (SB 701):** The Oregon Center for Nursing made major strides expanding the number of practicing nurses and enrolled nursing students. Unfortunately, the nursing faculty needs have not kept pace. To help address this problem we support a loan forgiveness program as an incentive for nurses to pursue a teaching career.
- **Banning Pay-Per-Visit Reimbursement (HB 2595):** Oregon's home health and hospice nurses care for complex post-surgery and end-of-life patients. Banning pay-per-visit reimbursement, will allow them to make decisions that improve the health of their patients and families and not focus on the bottom line of their employers.
- **Advanced Practice Prescription Dispensing (SB 605):** We must update the Board of Nursing statutes to not require Nurse Practitioners and Certified Nurse Specialists to personally hand prescriptions to patients that already understand the medication and the course of treatment. This would be consistent with physicians' practice and eliminate disruption in the practice setting.
- **Initiative (Ballot Measure) System Reform:** Oregon's initiative system needs increased oversight and factual reporting. Currently, some initiative proponents practice fraudulent signature gathering and use misleading titles to get the same ballot measures on the ballot

year after year. ONA supports greater control on the initiative system and the insertion of fiscal cost in the measure title to properly inform voters.

Additional Priorities for ONA Nurses

- **Menu Labeling to Support Healthy Eating (HB 2726):** Labeling is an important way to address Oregon's poor nutrition and obesity epidemic, especially in children. This legislation empowers Oregonians to exercise personal responsibility and make informed choices regarding their diets.
- **Integrated Pesticide Management at our Schools (SB 637):** A pattern of pesticide exposure of school children in classrooms and playgrounds has caused harmful effects on Oregon's kids. We're proposing our schools review and update their pesticide management policies.
- **Reducing Harmful Chemicals in Kid's Products (HB 2367):** Children experience greater exposure to environmental hazards than adults; many toys contain such toxins. Banning bisphenol A and phthalates in children's products protects Oregon's most vulnerable population.
- **Supporting the Worker Freedom Act (SB 519):** This bill allows employees to bypass certain employer sponsored meetings giving them the right to sue if disciplined or dismissed due to absence thus preventing "captive audience" meetings relating to religion, politics and union organizing in the workplace.
- **Tobacco Tax Increase to Fund Smoking Costs (HB 2122):** Increasing Oregon's tax on tobacco products to discourage this unhealthy behavior and cover the health care costs associated with tobacco usage is a double victory.
- **Labor Representation on the OHSU Board (HB 2570):** ONA supports the addition of a labor representative to the OHSU Board of Directors. This will strengthen ties between employees and management providing opportunities for proactive influence by workers on Board decisions. Students have had representation on the Board since program inception, now, labor should too.
- **Banning Grass Seed Field Burning (SB 528):** Inhalation of fine particulate matter pollution caused by field burning increases the risk of hospitalization from respiratory distress, heart attack and stroke; it is also implicated in premature death. These risks stem from both chronic and acute exposure. This archaic and health threatening practice must end in 2009.

For more information or to get involved with ONA's Government Relations program contact Samantha Shepherd at shepherd@oregonrn.org or call (503) 293-0011