



Testimony in Opposition to HB 4108

February 4, 2016

House Health Care Committee

Jenn Baker

Director of Health Policy and Government Relations

Chair Greenlick and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of the Oregon Nurses Association in opposition to House Bill 4108.

The Oregon Nurses Association is Oregon's oldest and largest nursing union and professional association, and is proud to represent more than 14,000 registered nurses, advanced practice nurses and nursing students in Oregon.

HB 4108 would require the state to create licensing rules and regulations for a new, unnecessary health care role, anesthesiologist assistants. In the United States, only 14 states and the District of Columbia explicitly recognize this position in state laws and there are no peer-reviewed studies published in scientific journals regarding AAs outcomes or quality of care.

Where Anesthesiologist assistants (AAs) are recognized, they have a limited scope of practice that prohibits them from practicing without supervision from an anesthesiologist. Because they cannot practice independently, AAs are limited to certain settings or geographic areas and would not be able to practice in many underserved rural areas, where there are no anesthesiologists. In that way, this new role cannot be expected to meaningfully address access issues in rural areas.

Certified registered nurse anesthetists (CRNAs) and anesthesiologists already provide safe, well-established and cost-effective anesthesia care in our state. CRNAs have been active in Oregon for more than 100 years and nationally outnumber AAs by more than 40,000 providers.

CRNAs are qualified to make independent judgments in all aspects of anesthesia care without supervision from an anesthesiologist and can assess and treat a broad range of health problems through their training as critical care nurses. This allows CRNAs to work in diverse settings throughout the state, including underserved rural areas.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony. Please oppose HB 4108.