



Testimony in Support of House Bill 4114
February 4, 2020
House Committee on Health Care
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Good afternoon Chair Salinas, Vice Chairs Nosse and Hayden, and members of the committee. My name is Deborah Riddick. I am the Director of Government Relations for the Oregon Nurses Association (ONA). We represent 15,000 registered nurses throughout the state, as well as our member organization, the Nurse Practitioners of Oregon. The ONA supports HB 4114, which would require public and private plan coverage of renal dialysis; place caps on charges, collections, and out-of-pocket costs; and prohibit outpatient renal dialysis facility from denying service based on inability to pay.

There's an estimated 3800 Oregonians currently on dialysis. The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality evaluated our state's data and provides a robust picture of the deficits and challenges facing those in our state who are on dialysis. In the most recent data year, patient safety was weak despite a slightly above average rating on efficacy of treatment. The same data identified weaknesses in structural access and treatment of African Americans, Latinos, and Asian Americans. It also identified co-morbidities including diabetes, cancer, cardiovascular disease, and mental health and substance abuse; <https://nhqrnet.ahrq.gov/inhqrdr/Oregon/dashboard>.

The ONA supports HB 4114 because it provides patients with access to life-saving treatment, reducing the toxic stress associated with an inability to pay. HB 4114 would also prevent patients, who are unable to pay, from missing treatment or cutting corners on food, medicine, or utilities in order to cover dialysis bills and co-pays; a patient's response to dialysis is dependent upon these competing financial responsibilities. Alternatively, if a patient avoids dialysis or cuts back on essential needs, the cost of care and treatment, typically provided as in-patient hospital services, increases dramatically and the patient's condition is exacerbated. As nurses, we witness the current impact of cost sharing and the burden it presents on those entrusted to our care.

HB 4114 would provide our most vulnerable residents the assurance of access to care that, for them, is life sustaining. If Oregon is truly a state that values access to health care as a right not a privilege, vote that value by support this important bill.