



June 12, 2003

TO: Mr. John Shilts, Administrator, Oregon DCBS, Workers' Compensation Division

FROM: The Medical Advisory Committee, Workers' Compensation Division

RE: HB 2828

The Medical Advisory Committee (MAC) opposes HB 2828. The Nurse Practitioner (NP) position was developed as a physician extender in the 1960's, in order to provide a greater number of individuals access to basic primary care. Over the last decade, NPs have put significant effort into increasing their scope of practice to become autonomous and on legal par with physicians, but without the commensurate level of training. The need for medical providers that have been trained to provide basic primary care cannot be overstated, but the care of injured workers requires an understanding beyond what two years of graduate nursing education can provide.

The nursing profession by its very nature has a different focus than the medical profession. Nursing assessments are directed at the symptoms of injury/illness, patient/family response to injury and illness, health risks, coping behaviors, etc. The MAC supports the current status of NPs, but does not support the broadened scope of practice proposed in HB 2828. Complicated work injuries/illnesses typically last more than 30 days, can lead to permanent impairment and require the diagnostic acumen that comes from the extensive training of a four year in-depth medical education (beyond a four year college pre-medical education), followed by post-doctoral training. This education is focused on medical decision making as well as performing medical procedures in the context of evaluating, diagnosing and treating a large number of people, with a broad range of illnesses and injuries in hospital and outpatient settings.

The MAC appreciates the opportunity to provide its broad based input to the Management and Labor Committee.

Sincerely,
Tamara Arthur, DO, Chair
Medical Advisory Committee

