

Oregon Consensus

National Policy Consensus Center | Hatfield School of Government

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Scope of Practice Project Background

Problem Background

Scope of practice regulations define the procedures, actions and processes that licensed healthcare professionals and other service providers may legally perform. Each session, legislators receive numerous proposals to change scopes of practice, either to permit additional activities (sometimes already included in another profession's scope of practice) or to exclude services currently provided. These proposals often trigger complex, time consuming, and highly polarized conflicts between professional groups, and no process currently exists for vetting the issues and resolving conflicts. As a result, legislators face challenges in responding to proposed changes in a manner that upholds public safety, stakeholders are often dissatisfied with outcomes, and counter-requests are common.

Assessment and Recommendation

Oregon Consensus, a program of the National Policy Consensus Center at Portland State University assessed the potential for improving the process for responding to scope of practice requests. Oregon Consensus determined that stakeholders perceive the current process as time consuming, costly, inefficient, and tending to benefit stakeholders with the most money or largest number of constituents. Oregon Consensus recommended that legislators convene a stakeholder group to develop recommendations regarding criteria and a process to evaluate future scope of practice requests. That process could include the use of a neutral third party or group to vet or resolve these issues.

Action Planned

Representatives of the Senate and House Health Care Committees have accepted the Oregon Consensus recommendation and will convene a representative stakeholder group to develop recommendations to improve the process for resolving scope of practice issues. The goal is to pilot and evaluate the effectiveness of a revised process during the 2009 legislative session.

Current List of Potential Participants

While membership in the advisory committee is still being formed, it is expected to include stakeholders representing a broad range of interests including: professional associations, lobbyists, legislators, licensing boards, insurance companies, and the public.

Project Funding

Funds are being requested from professional associations to support the costs associated with the Scope of Practice Advisory Group. Total budget for this project is \$28,500, which includes designing, convening, facilitating, and coordinating five meetings over the next six months. Oregon Consensus is donating its services to the project (\$14,000), so the funds still needing to be raised for project services amount to \$14,500.

The following organizations have already pledged funds to support this effort:

Oregon Naturopathic Physician Association
Chiropractic Association of Oregon
Oregon Optometric Physicians Association
Oregon Medical Association
Oregon Physical Therapy Association
Oregon Academy of Ophthalmology

Contact Laurel Singer, Oregon Consensus Program Manager, at laurels@pdx.edu or 503-725-8224 if your association would like to contribute or would like more information on this effort.