



# Issue Response

OREGON HEALTH LICENSING AGENCY

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## Respiratory Therapy

**February 8, 2011**

On July 21, 2010, the Oregon Health Licensing Agency (OHLA) received questions regarding administration of sublingual nitroglycerin tablets from Mary Holm of PeaceHealth, Florence, Oregon.

Upon consideration and request by the Respiratory Therapist Licensing Board, OHLA consulted with its General Counsel at the Department of Justice and responded to the following questions:

### **Issue**

May ORS 688.800 be interpreted to include, within the respiratory therapy scope of practice, administration of sublingual nitroglycerin tablets to patients during cardiac stress tests at the direction of a licensed physician?

### **Answer**

Under the law, all respiratory care requires the prescription of a licensed physician and oversight of a medical director; however even under a medical director's supervision, a respiratory therapist may still only act within the scope of his or her license.

Regarding administration of sublingual nitroglycerin tablets to patients during cardiac stress tests, it appears respiratory therapists *may not* administer sublingual nitroglycerin tablets to patients during cardiac stress tests because respiratory therapists may only administer pharmacological agents during diagnostic regimens associated with pulmonary (lung) problems. Cardiac stress tests are prescribed as diagnostic tests for cardiac (heart) problems.

***Important Note:*** OHLA does not provide personal legal advice to licensees or members of the public. The responses below are specific to only those questions asked. Even slight changes in the scope or content of the question may change the applicability of these responses in a different situation. Please consult your own attorney for legal advice regarding Oregon laws and administrative rules.