

MEASURE: HB 2404
EXHIBIT: F
Joint Committee on Tax Credits 76th Session
DATE: 04-26-2011 PAGES: 2
SUBMITTED BY: Tom Mann

From: Mann Tom
To: Rep Bailey; Rep Barnhart; Rep Bentz; Rep Berger; Sen Burdick; Rep Gelsler; Sen Hass; Sen Morse; Rep Read; Rep EyreBrewer; Rep Wand; Sen Telfer; MANN Tom
Cc: LRO; HOEFT Nicole
Subject: RE: HB 2404A Veterans Mental Health Tax Credit
Date: Wednesday, April 27, 2011 7:25:16 AM

Dear Co-Chairs and Committee Members,

I mis-spoke in this email - the VA Exporting Its Medical Expertise is SB 276 not SB 275. SB 276 also has passed the Senate and is on the House Floor for Third Reading. My apologies!

Tom

-----Original Message-----

From: Mann Tom
Sent: Wednesday, April 27, 2011 7:26 AM
To: 'sen.ginnyburdick@state.or.us'; 'sen.frankmorse@state.or.us'; 'sen.markhass@state.or.us'; 'sen.christelfer@state.or.us'; 'rep.julesbailey@state.or.us'; 'rep.vickiberger@state.or.us'; 'rep.saragelser@state.or.us'; REP Wand; 'rep.philbarnhart@state.or.us'; 'rep.cliffbentz@state.or.us'; REP EyreBrewer; 'rep.tobiasread@state.or.us'
Cc: Mann Tom; Hoeft Nicole; LRO
Subject: HB 2404A Veterans Mental Health Tax Credit

Dear Co-Chairs and Members of the Committee,

Yesterday in your Tax Credits Committee, you heard three bills seeking tax credits for military and veterans. During the discussion on HB 2404A, which seeks a \$2,500 tax credit for mental health workers who treat veterans, there were a couple questions unanswered that I hope to answer this morning.

Representative Bentz asked why the bill limited the credit to those providers who take new clients and is not given to providers already seeing veterans.

This is the way LC drafted the bill and they modeled it on the current TRI-CARE tax credit. That being said, I have a suggestion for HB 2404A that may make it more doable within the scope of the budget.

If HB 2404A were amended to provide a tax credit to any mental health provider who sees a certain number of veterans in Rural and Frontier Oregon and not just new providers, I believe the revenue impact would be significantly lessened and the benefit would be directed where it is most needed. When the Legislative Task Force on Women Veterans' Health Care submitted this bill, the Task Force knew that it was a long shot, but believed the issue of mental health for women veterans, as well as all veterans, was so important that the bill would facilitate the discussion. If there is a way to amend the bill to take a bite of this apple, we would happily do so!

Representative Wand asked if we knew how many mental health providers are in Oregon. I actually have been trying to figure that out, but have been unable to get a grasp on it because there are so many different flavors of mental health provider. For example, there are psychiatrists, psychologists, psychiatric nurse practitioners, licensed clinical social workers, licensed counselors, and even primary care doctors and physician assistants that provide psychiatric medication to patients. We just don't know the number. However, by paring the bill down to rural and frontier Oregon, the number of providers affected by the bill shrinks exponentially due to the lack of such providers in these areas.

Co-Chair Berger asked about the competency of the providers and how do we ensure they can appropriately service this veteran population.

We have introduced SB 275, which encourages the United States Department of Veterans Affairs to export its medical expertise to non-VA providers in Oregon. I have spoken with the Portland VA Medical Center about this bill and they are excited to provide continuing medical education classes on topics such as PTSD, Traumatic Brain Injury, Military Sexual Trauma, Spinal Cord Injury, and more. SB 275 has passed the Senate and is on the House Floor for Third Reading. We will use SB 275 as the mechanism to train up the mental health community on specialty issues, such as Combat PTSD (which is different than trauma PTSD) and Military Sexual Trauma.

I want to thank you again for taking the time to listen to our testimony on HB 2404A. We understand it may be a bridge too far this session given the budget; however, we would ask that you keep in mind the need of our veterans to access mental health services in places where the VA cannot provide such service and in the cases where the veteran does not qualify for VA benefits.

Respectfully,

Tom Mann
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