

## Scholars for a Healthy Oregon Initiative



As a public university and hospital, OHSU continually seeks to serve the healthcare provider needs of Oregon through its educational programs. However, two critical challenges exist when educating health providers for the state: the high cost of tuition for students and the mal-distribution of providers throughout the state. Both adversely affect the state by limiting the type of student who can enter these schools and by driving students to choose higher-paying subspecialties rather than primary care. With the almost 400,000 individuals who will be newly eligible for health insurance coverage in 2014 as a result of the Affordable Care Act, the demand for primary care providers in Oregon is expected to grow exponentially and poses serious risks to system capacity.

Student tuition rates have reached a level that is creating extraordinary challenges for students who graduate with large debt burdens and wish to pursue primary care or rural practice after graduation. Even more distressing, is the inability of some students to even apply to OHSU because the amount of debt after graduation makes the opportunity seem out of reach. Students that do take on the debt often choose to enter subspecialty areas, rather than fill the primary care needs of our state. The high tuition at OHSU results in students graduating with significant amounts of debt (Average: DMD - \$193,351; MD - \$182,226; CRNA - \$135,914, NP - \$52,414). With these levels of debt students tend to move into better paying tertiary/quaternary sub- specialties rather than entering careers in primary care. This has a significant negative impact on our pipeline of students and the well-being of rural and underserved communities in Oregon.

In addition, the mal-distribution of providers—whether dentists, nurses, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, pharmacists or physicians—is a very real issue for a large portion of the state. It is increasingly difficult to recruit and retain providers in more rural areas. A majority of providers continue to choose urban or suburban practice; in 2010 only 10% of Oregon’s licensed physicians were actively practicing in rural areas, where 37% of the population resides. In 2012 Oregon Office for Rural Health found that 59 of the state’s 105 rural service areas have unmet health care workforce needs.

To address the issues related to high tuition and a shortage of healthcare professionals in Oregon’s rural and underserved communities, OHSU is proposing the Scholars for a Healthy Oregon Initiative.

### **Scholars for a Healthy Oregon Initiative \$4,917,508**

The \$4,917,508 will help OHSU to start addressing the shortage of healthcare professionals in Oregon’s underserved and rural communities through the Scholars for a Healthy Oregon Initiative. This program will pay the entire cost of tuition and fees for (up to) 40 students in exchange for their commitment to working after graduation in Oregon’s underserved or rural communities. Because research shows that students

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who are from a rural or underserved area are 6 times more likely to want to return to that area, the program would give preference to students who are: Oregonians, first generation students, from a regional university such as EOU, SOU, WOU, OIT, and/or represent a diverse or rural background.

Students in OHSU’s MD, DMD, Advanced Nurse Practice and PA programs would be eligible to apply for one of the Scholars for a Healthy Oregon slots. The expectation is that these students, upon completion of their training, would work in full-time practice at a site designated as a critical needs area with a requirement to see patients regardless of the ability to pay. A designated service site in Oregon will be determined by whether or not the geographic area, population group, or facility site is within a Health Professional Shortage Area, Medically Underserved Area, or Medically Underserved Population as designed by the Federal Health Resources and Services Administration. It is expected that by designation, all of these sites will provide care to Medicaid patients. The length of the required commitment after graduation will be N+1 year, where N is the length in years of their degree program. Failure to meet this commitment will require the student to pay back the full cost of their tuition and fees plus an additional 25% penalty.

The actual number of Scholars for a Healthy Oregon selected each year will be dependent on the distribution of applicants across OHSU’s academic programs, but a potential distribution is shown in the table included below:

Program	Number Admitted		Grand Total	
	Resident	Non-Resident		
School of Medicine	MD Program	12	0	\$2,143,848
	PA Program	6	0	\$560,082
School Dentistry	DMD Program	6	0	\$1,020,378
School of Nursing	CRNA	6	0	\$408,720
	Graduate Nursing	10	0	\$784,480
Total		40	0	\$4,917,508

\*\*\*Please note that the number of slots among the degree programs, as well as the number of Oregonians versus non-residents slots, can be modified depending on the needs of the state.

\*\*\*All funds will go directly to tuition for Scholars for a Healthy Oregon program

# Oregon Medically Underserved as of November 2011



