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TO: Senate Committee on Education and Workforce Development
FROM: Jim Middleton
President, Central Oregon Community College
DATE: May 14, 2013
RE: Testimony in Support of HB 3341-A

A few years ago, working with local health care providers, Central Oregon Community College (COCC) began exploring developing a program in phlebotomy training. It was a good fit for COCC and the health care industry: it is an entry-level health occupation with local jobs available and we could work through our business and industry non-credit program.

A student could take a course, get an entry-level job and after some on-the-job experience was qualified to sit for industry certification exams. COCC purchased curriculum from a vendor and met with representative from our largest health care providers, St. Charles Medical Center and Bend Memorial Clinic. Both were supportive and neither indicated that there were other providers (or potential providers) in our area. In several meetings with St. Charles, we discussed possible practicum placement for our students. Additionally, they offered support for the course in several ways including hosting a class tour of the lab, reviewing curriculum and providing input, and eventually hiring some of our students upon completion. BMC was willing to provide individual practicum opportunities for students following the completion of our class. Nursing Department Chair Dana Topliff was the instructor and participated in the meetings with industry.

COCC successfully ran one class and we were part way through the next course when we were contacted by State of Oregon, indicating that we had started our phlebotomy course without going through the proper approval process of notifying the State to be sure our course would not cause adverse impact on any private career school in our area. We had done our research of the market and knew that there was not another provider.

However, there was a Eugene provider – 130 miles away on the other side of the mountains – which was considering offering their phlebotomy course in Bend – but had not yet offered the course. Neither of our industry partners were aware of this plan, indicating that they had not worked with local employers in their planning process. There were threats of legal action, and in the end we agreed that we would discontinue offering phlebotomy courses at COCC after the current course was finished, disappointing our partners here in Central Oregon. We continue to get inquiries from potential students and it doesn't make sense to them, either.

Central Oregon Community College worked with industry partners to create a program that met their needs, that met the needs of students, that trained workers for jobs. We were forced to discontinue the program because of the possibility that a private provider located hours away and without consultation with local employers, was considering a similar program. With the passage of HB3341, we could once again fulfill our mission and meet the needs of the health care industry in Central Oregon.