



MEMORANDUM

To: Chair Laurie Monnes-Anderson
Members of the Senate Health Care and Human Services Committee

From: Dr. Bud Pierce, OMA President

Date: February 11, 2013

Re: Support for SB 440

MEASURE: SB 440
EXHIBIT: 7
S. HEALTHCARE & HUMAN SERVICES
DATE: 2/11/13 PAGES: 1
SUBMITTED BY: Dr. Bud Pierce

The OMA is committed to supporting the development and retention of an adequate number of well-educated physicians in all specialties to meet anticipated health care needs of all Oregonians. In particular, we believe it is critical for our state to educate and attract primary care physicians. We know from survey data that nearly half the state's practicing physicians are over 50 years of age and approaching retirement age¹. National associations, including the American Academy of Family Physicians, continue to forecast health care provider shortages and predict a shortfall of almost 40,000 primary care providers by the year 2020².

The OMA supports SB 440, which funds the Primary Care Services Program, and provides needed incentives to encourage medical students to enter primary care. Incenting primary care practice through loan repayment programs linked to practice commitments and tax credits is an important tool to recruit and retain primary care practitioners in rural parts of the state. Medical students in Oregon carry some of the highest debt loads of medical students nationwide (Western Oregon University and OHSU are ranked #5 and #23 respectively³). According to the AAMC, median student debt upon graduation is \$162,000 for all schools.

Over the next biennium, as more Oregonians become insured and seek access to health services, ensuring a robust health care workforce is critical. With the passage of SB 440 and the renewal of the loan repayment program for primary care practice, Oregon has the opportunity to continue bending the curve on the predicted provider shortfalls and provide adequate access to health care for all Oregonians by supporting newly graduated medical doctors in primary care practice.

The OMA would like to thank the sponsors of this program and encourage the committee to support this bill.

¹ Whitaker, K. (2004). Physician workforce in Oregon 2004: A snapshot. Unpublished raw data, Oregon Office of Rural Health, Oregon Health & Sciences University, Portland, OR. Retrieved from: <http://www.ohsu.edu/xd/outreach/oregon-rural-health/data/upload/2004-Physician-Workforce-Data.pdf>

² American Academy of Family Physicians Policies and Recommendations: <http://www.aafp.org/online/en/home/policy/policies/w/workforce.html>

³ US News and World Report: Whose graduates have the most debt/ (2012). Retrieved from <http://grad-schools.usnews.rankingsandreviews.com/best-graduate-schools/top-medical-schools/debt-rankings>