



Representative Mitch Greenlick, Chair  
Representative Alisa Keny-Guyer, Vice-Chair  
Representative Jim Thompson, Vice-Chair  
Members of the House Health Care Committee

March 1, 2013

Dear Chair Greenlick, Vice-Chair Keny-Guyer, Vice-Chair Thompson, and members of the committee:

My name is Michael Jaczko and I am the current vice-president of the Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons of Oregon. I would like to thank you for this opportunity to discuss our concerns regarding House Bill 2902.

Oregon has a real need to strengthen the primary care physician workforce in the state, and this bill would create both a disincentive for practicing primary physicians to move to Oregon and would discourage medical students from entering into primary care fields.

A strong primary care physician workforce is essential to quality patient care in Oregon and in meeting Oregon's health care reform goals of improving quality of care, improving health, and lowering costs. Mandating nurse practitioner and physician assistant payments to be equal to physician payments could cause insurers to simply lower the rates paid to primary care physicians. This would further exacerbate current primary care physician payment disparities and would devalue the critical importance of a strong primary care physician network.

Nurse practitioners, physician assistants, allopathic physicians (MDs) and osteopathic physicians (DOs) all bring unique attributes to the health care system in Oregon and the level of training required for each of these provider groups should be recognized.

We encourage efforts to improve the primary care workforce in Oregon for all level of practitioners but not at the detriment of primary care physicians. We support a robust primary care system that values the unique qualifications of all providers. If the purpose of this legislation is to address insurer payment cuts to nurse practitioners, we would support restoration of payments, but a not a broad mandate legislating equal payment for a wide group of practitioners with vastly different training requirements. The American Academy of Family Physicians reports family physician minimum required clinical training hours at 20,700-21,700 compared to 2,800-5,350 for nurse practitioners.



This bill also ignores efforts for comprehensive reform in our health care system and the need for new methods of payment to reward quality over quantity of services. This bill is an attempt at a short-term solution focusing on one subset of providers, without consideration of how it may impact the entire health care system.

Osteopathic physicians have a strong history of serving in primary care fields. About 60% of osteopathic physicians in Oregon serve in primary care specialties. Unfortunately, the number of osteopathic medical school graduates entering into primary care has been decreasing over the past several years.

The Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons of Oregon represent over 900 osteopathic physicians, residents, and medical students in Oregon. OPSO opposes this bill as we have concerns over how this legislation could impact the primary care physician workforce in Oregon.

We ask that you oppose HB 2902.

Thank you,

Michael Jaczko, DO