



MEMORANDUM

To: Chair Greenlick, House Committee on Health Care
Vice-Chair Keny-Guyer, House Committee on Health Care
Vice-Chair Thompson, House Committee on Health Care
Members of the House Committee on Health Care

From: Bryan Boehringer, OMA Government Affairs
Courtnei Dresser, OMA Government Affairs

Date: March 11, 2013

Re: Support for HB 2858

The Oregon Medical Association is committed to supporting the development and retention of an adequate number of well-educated physicians in primary care to meet the health care needs of all Oregonians. We support HB 2858, which renews funding for the Primary Health Care Loan Forgiveness Program, as an innovative approach that continues to recruit and retain physicians, nurse practitioners and physician assistants interested in primary care to our state.

Funding the Primary Health Care Loan Forgiveness Program incents health care providers to pursue primary care practice and pursue their passion for serving individuals, families and communities, especially in rural areas. The earning differential in Oregon and across the country for primary care and specialty physicians continues to grow. Re-funding the loan forgiveness program makes primary care a viable option for new physicians as it offers a competing incentive to the pursuit of specialty care. In addition, physicians who complete their primary care training in Oregon are far more likely to remain in Oregon if they can access loan forgiveness dollars here in Oregon.

Retaining primary health care providers is critical to address the continuing shortage of primary care providers, particularly in Oregon's rural areas. As we continue to focus health care reforms in our health care system on improving the health of the population, decreasing cost, improving quality, accessibility and reliability of care, it's clear that robust primary care system is part of the solution. Data shows that primary care providers produce better health outcomes at lower costs.

We urge your support of primary care providers in Oregon by renewing the Primary Health Care Loan Forgiveness Program.