

The Honorable Alissa Keny-Guyer
900 Court St. NE, H-484
Salem, OR 97301

February 16, 2015

Dear Representative Alissa Keny-Guyer:

I am writing in request of your support on HB2048, a bill that would grant occupational therapists the right to participate in the primary care provider loan repayment program. As a Doctorate of Occupational Therapy student, and citizen in your district, I am particularly interested in expanding occupational therapy (OT) services to rural areas of Oregon, and supporting graduates by offering a financial incentive for relocation.

The mission of occupational therapy is to promote health and wellness through functional and meaningful activities. The occupational therapist incorporates individual interests, values, and beliefs into treatment planning in order to tailor each client's process. Licensed occupational therapists work in a variety of settings, from hospitals to schools, sports medicine clinics to community mental health centers. This diversity of settings is directly related to the guiding principle of equity in participation across the lifespan. In short: OT is interested in helping people *do*.

Inclusion of occupational therapists in primary care could prevent the relocation of long time residents who need OT services to recover from life-altering injuries. It could allow older community members to remain in their homes longer and more safely, with the help of adaptive OT strategies and home modifications. Perhaps most significant in this discussion is the established role of OT in urban acute care hospital units. OT in acute care has the ultimate responsibility of assessing the patient's ability to function independently (or with the assistance of a caregiver), and designating an appropriate destination for discharge. OT is critical in encouraging patient safety through education, thus mitigating the chance of hospital re-admittance. Patients leave with a better understanding of what to expect from their recovery process, as well as how they can play an active part in it. Put simply, the quality of care improves dramatically with the inclusion of OT services in hospitals.

In summary, OT is an essential partner in truly client-centered primary care in rural Oregon. This is why I ask your support on HB2048, allowing OT to be included amongst other primary care providers in receiving loan repayment privileges. I will be in Salem on February 26th, and will stop by your office to discuss this with you.

Sincerely,

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