



Testimony in Support of HB 2125

February 27, 2015

House Health Care Committee

Jack Dempsey

Oregon Nurses Association

Chair Greenlick and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of the Oregon Nurses Association in support of HB 2125, which extends the rural medical tax credit.

The rural health care provider tax credit is an essential recruiting and retention tool. Rural communities struggle to attract quality health care providers. Lack of health care providers in rural areas means that residents can't easily access the care they need when they need it, meaning that needed care can be delayed, and that a patient may be required to travel a considerable distance to see a provider.

In 2013, 479 Nurse Practitioners used this tax credit in communities from Alsea, to Burns, to Lakeview, to Prineville to Sandy.

Oregon Nurse Practitioners have earned a broad scope of practice and are critical component of Oregon's health care workforce. In some of these communities, a Nurse Practitioner may be the only primary care provider in the area.

Being a rural health care provider is a unique job and isn't for everyone. Provider recruitment and retention are critical issues in rural communities. The availability of the tax credit is one of the few "carrots" rural clinics have to offer when recruiting much needed providers. The tax credit helps off-set some of the financial burden of foregone wages for the provider and their family who may sacrifice other benefits to live and practice in rural Oregon.

Oregon's rural provider tax credit is a significant incentive to work in a rural area, and almost more importantly, to stay. Rural communities need every advantage they can get to recruit quality health care providers.

ONA urges your support of House Bill 2125.