



MEMORANDUM

To: Sen. Alan Bates, Co-chair, Joint Committee on Ways and Means on Human Services
Rep. Nancy Nathanson, Co-chair, Joint Committee on Ways and Means on Human Services
Members of Joint Committee on Ways and Means on Human Services

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

Date: June 8, 2015

Re: Support for SB 757 – Rural Incentive Program Data Collection

SB 757 would provide funding for the Oregon Healthcare Workforce Institute (OHWI) to work with the Oregon Center of Nursing (OCN) to collect data on the state's current underserved and rural recruitment and incentive programs.

The legislatively appropriated programs that are meant to incentivize providers to practice in rural and underserved areas in Oregon are under constant pressure to maintain funding because of the limited amount of revenue available. Each session, programs that incentivize rural practice, such as the rural health tax credit, rural medical liability subsidies, loan forgiveness and loan repayment are jeopardized and held under constant threat of elimination.

Oregon's Healthcare Workforce Committee was recently asked to report on the range of incentive programs designed to encourage providers to practice in underserved areas or with underserved populations in Oregon. The Committee was charged with developing criteria for monitoring the programs and evaluating their outcomes and effectiveness. They were also tasked with recommending strategies for sustaining, expanding, and/or re-targeting the programs as necessary. The committee's top recommendation was that the Oregon Legislature, Oregon Health and Science University and Oregon Health Authority should support system-wide data collection and analysis, using common performance measures wherever possible, and use program performance information to inform decision-making.

Better data would help legislators evaluate the effectiveness of these programs. Collecting and analyzing the data will provide policymakers the necessary information to make community specific decisions to help attract and retain health care providers in the communities that need them the most.

The OMA encourages your support of SB 757.