



Senate Health Care Committee

February 2, 2106

**OPSO opposes removal of the sunset on HB 2902 and supports the development of a comprehensive payment policy to address provider reimbursement.**

On behalf of the over 1,200 osteopathic physicians, medical residents, and medical students we represent I urge the committee to **oppose** the removal of the sunset for HB 2902 and allow the development of a comprehensive policy to address provider reimbursement.

If we remove the sunset as proposed in SB 1503 we make a permanent policy that standardizes payments across practitioners that have different educational, credentialing, insurance, and certification requirements. This does not ensure equal pay for equal work. The billing codes that we are standardizing payments on are not a reflection of work or value, but of cost.

In the reimbursement system based on costs, by standardizing payments, we ignore the additional costs of training a physician as compared to training a nurse practitioner or physician assistant. The additional costs borne by physicians with medical school tuition and certification and residency is significant. By standardizing payments in this current payment model, the Oregon Legislature is saying that there is no value to physicians' residency training and clinical training throughout medical school.

We are really focusing in the wrong areas when we are trying to standardize payments rather than working on payment policies that strengthen primary care as set out in HB 2902. HB 2092 was drafted to set up a temporary payment policy for NPs & PAs to restore their rates while comprehensive primary care reimbursement policies for all practitioners could be developed. **The defined problem was not a difference in payment between provider types, but that of an insurer dropping primary care payments to nurse practitioners.**

HB 2902 specifically calls for development of a comprehensive payment structure for physicians, physician assistants and certified nurse practitioners that "must promote the maintenance and expansion of the primary care and mental health care workforce in this state."

The primary care environment is especially important to osteopathic physicians as about 60% of our members serve in primary care fields. More emphasis needs to be placed in primary care as a strong primary care network is essential in meeting Oregonians healthcare needs. We have a major challenge in primary care as fewer and fewer physicians are choosing primary care fields due to rising costs of education and low reimbursement in primary care specialties.

With the current language in HB 2902 the current payment policy for NPs & PAs does not expire until 2018. We have the 2016 interim and full 2017 session to explore opportunities for primary care payment policies. OPSO strongly opposes removal of the sunset as laid out in SB 1503 and hopes to work with stakeholder in development of payment policies that promote primary care across all provider types.

Sincerely,

David Walls  
Executive Director