



MEMORANDUM

To: Sen. Monroe, Co-Chair, SubCommittee on Education
Rep. Smith Warner, Co-Chair, SubCommittee on Education
Members of the SubCommittee on Education

From: Courtni Dresser, OMA Government Relations
Trevor Beltz, OMA Government Relations

Date: April 18, 2017

Re: Support for Oregon Health and Science University Budget HB 5524

The OMA urges your support for full funding of the School of Medicine, the Office of Rural Health, and Area Health Education Centers at Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU). Not funding these programs would negatively impact health care education programs that are vital to Oregonians and would only further exacerbates our state's workforce shortage.

Oregon's investment in medical education has allowed Oregon to maintain a higher retention rate than the national average and to slowly grow the physician workforce. Without the continued investment from the state to maintain these programs, Oregon's physician workforce is at risk- both to be trained in Oregon and to remain in Oregon.

Investing in tomorrow's medical doctors enables the OHSU School of Medicine to keep tuition rates steady and helps lower overall student debt. Making medical school education attainable to every Oregon resident and attracting students from other states is critical to growing Oregon's physician workforce and ensuring health care access to all Oregonians.

The majority of OHSU graduates have debt, and pressure to pay off that debt discourages physicians from practicing in rural and underserved areas where reimbursement rates are lower. Key investments by the Oregon Legislature, such as the Oregon Rural Scholars Program, Loan Repayment program, Loan Forgiveness program and Scholars for Healthy Oregon Initiative, are vital to keeping Oregon medical school graduates in Oregon and encouraging them to serve in rural and underserved areas of our state.

Recruiting and retaining Oregon-trained physicians requires a commitment to excellence in education that reflects today's health care environment. The OHSU Curriculum Transformation Initiative is better preparing today's medical student to practice as part of a team in a health care landscape shaped by genetics, health care reform and technology. OHSU needs the legislature's continued investment in it as the only state public academic health institution to ensure it remains one of the nation's top medical schools. We cannot afford to waver in our state's commitment to health care education.