

Senator Wagner and members of the Senate Committee on Education. Effective health care is dependent upon having a well-trained team of professionals who can support the full spectrum of patient needs from prevention through recovery. Increasingly, recovery from injury has become systemic challenge due to the lack of licensed physical therapists.

Nationally and in Oregon the educational level required to be licensed as a physical therapist is the Doctorate in Physical Therapy (DPT). Oregon has only two DPT programs and both are located at higher cost private universities in Portland.

As the Director of Physical Therapy for the Corvallis Clinic with 19 years of experience in the profession, I oversee a team that treats patients from the coast to Lebanon and Sweet Home. I know that timely access to a physical therapist can both reduce the recovery time and improve the overall health of the patient. Unfortunately the Corvallis Clinic, like every other Oregon provider is unable to hire enough Physical Therapists to meet the increasing demand for physical therapy.

The Corvallis Clinic has been working with Western Oregon University to create a new DPT program that will serve Corvallis and the mid-Willamette Valley. I serve as the Clinic's representative to the WOU DPT Advisory Committee.

The proposed dash-2 amendment to House Bill 2871 will remove a barrier that prevents WOU from continuing its development of this critically needed program. I understand the Higher Education Coordinating Committee has expressed opposition to this change despite recent assurances to the contrary. I find this sudden reversal to be arbitrary and lacking in substance. To delay a high quality program such as what WOU is developing is deny patients access to the very level of care that will improve their health and quality of life.

I cannot understand why there would be any reason to delay such a vital program that has the active support of many experienced physical therapists and their employers. On behalf of the Corvallis Clinic I strongly urge you to support the amendments to House Bill 2871 that would allow WOU to move forward without unnecessary delay in the development of the DPT program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Gray, DPT". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the letters "DPT" written in a larger, more distinct font at the end of the line.

Michael Gray, PT, DPT, COMT, FAAOMPT

Director of Physical Therapy, Corvallis Clinic