



To: House Committee on Human Services  
Regarding: **Support for House Bill 2348**

March 15, 2021

Dear Chair Williams and members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons of Oregon and the over 1,500 osteopathic physicians and medical students we represent, I am writing to express our support for House Bill 2348. This bill is about increasing access to healthy, plant-based, whole food meals for Oregonians and encouraging our healthcare facilities and other public entities to be leaders in improving the health of Oregonians through healthy diets.

This bill should really be uncontroversial. We have agreement among healthcare professionals about the removal of harmful tobacco and vaping products in various settings. It seems natural that we would have the same agreement regarding food products that are known to contribute to disease. As healthcare professionals **do not recommend** a healthy lifestyle to include tobacco products, it seems natural that they **would not recommend** a healthy lifestyle to include foods proven to contribute to cancer, heart-disease and obesity. The discussion on this bill clearly shows that we have a lot of work to do in education and public health outreach encouraging healthy nutrition.

I hope you will consider the strong stance we have taken to discourage smoking when considering the efforts needed to discourage unhealthy diets that contribute to so many chronic diseases. While we support the original bill, OPSO is in support with the -2 amendments that would remove the proposed elimination of processed meats in these facilities to build consensus in continuing the work in helping Oregonians lead healthier lives.

As you know, what we eat has a profound impact on our health. Plant based meals have been shown to prevent and reverse heart disease, diabetes, obesity, and many other chronic diseases. HB 2348 provides Oregonians with greater access to healthy meals by requiring hospitals, certain health care facilities, and prisons in Oregon to make a plant-based meal available where a meal is served.

This bill is of particular importance to osteopathic physicians as the fundamental philosophy of the osteopathic medical profession is the understanding that the body is an integrated whole – health is not simply the absence of disease, and wellness cannot be maintained without a comprehensive approach to the multiple factors that influences one’s health. Diet and nutrition are the key components and improper diet is a leading contributor to many of the major chronic diseases impacting Oregonians. The science and evidence show us that increasing whole food, plant-based meals can positively impact our well-being.

Specifically:

- For every 10 grams of fiber (only found in plant foods) added to one's diet the risk of heart disease and colon cancer is reduced by 10%. Adding 14 grams of fiber leads to ingesting 10% less calories for the day (while feeling just as full) promoting weight loss.
- Studies (Ornish and Esselstyn studies) have shown documented reversal of heart disease; our country's number one cause of death. These studies showed angiographic documentation of opening of the coronary arteries and they both included a whole food plant-based diet for one to three years.
- The World Health Organization has classified processed meats as Class 1 carcinogens

We ask that you support HB 2348 and take a step toward reversing the chronic disease trends associated with poor diet and provide Oregonians with increased access to healthy food choices.

Sincerely,

David Walls  
Executive Director