



Oregon Office of Rural Health

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Dear Chair Prusak and Members of the Committee,

My name is Robert Duehmig and I am the Interim-Director of the Oregon Office of Rural Health. I am here today to urge your support for HB 2464. HB 2464 is an efficient and effective way to alleviate the shortage on Surgical Technicians in our rural communities.

Workforce is an important part of the mission of the Office of Rural Health. ORH staff includes a full-time health care provider recruiter and staff focused on the administration of loan repayment, loan forgiveness and other provider incentives. We are hearing on a regular basis from rural hospitals they are unable to find certified surgical technicians due to the current training requirements for certification.

The inclusion of Technologist in Surgery -Certification (TS-C), issued by the National Center for Competency Testing (NCCT) as a training option is a win win for our rural hospitals and our rural communities. The current model of certification has limited the training options and restricted the development of an important part of our healthcare workforce. The TS-C is recognized in 45 other states. It allows for both a work experience and work-based learning path to certification, which would make it a better fit for helping incumbent workers and creating innovative new workforce pipeline. HB 2464 is a grow your own program that will meet the needs of our rural facilities.

There are multiple challenges to the recruitment and retention of providers in rural areas. One of those is the overall work and facility environment. A physician coming to a rural facility that is struggling to fill other important healthcare roles, including surgical technicians, is one that may not stay. HB 2464 will help increase the number of surgical technicians, improve the overall healthcare environment and can be one element in improving the retention of other providers.

I encourage your support of HB 2464.

Thank you for your time.

Robert Duehmig
Interim -Director
Oregon Office of Rural Health

