



Honorable Chair Rob Nosse
House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care
Oregon Capitol, Salem Oregon

RE: PeaceHealth support for rural caregiver tax credits: HBs 2552, 2602, 2626 and 2723

Chair Nosse and Members of the House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care,

We are grateful that the House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care is considering House Bills 2552, 2602, 2626 and 2723. Rural caregiver tax credits will help with statewide recruitment and retention of vitally important health care workers.

PeaceHealth operates four hospital facilities as well as multiple clinics and ambulatory services in Lane County, where PeaceHealth is currently recruiting to fill more over 550 caregiver positions. Over 80 of these positions are specific to our rural hospitals in Florence and Cottage Grove. Openings range from entry level caregivers looking to explore and build a career, to experienced providers, nurses, and other clinicians.

In our recruiting experience, we have seen that Oregon is at a competitive disadvantage in terms of housing availability and schools. We need strong recruitment and retention tools to combat housing disadvantages; in Florence and Cottage Grove inadequate housing availability is a particularly persistent barrier to hiring. The rural tax credits under consideration today, while not a panacea, are tools that will contribute to the success of health care recruitment and retention in Lane County, and we see them as a signal that the State is a partner in this work.

The caregivers we recruit are the cornerstone of the high-quality, patient-centered care we deliver. This is why PeaceHealth is focused on recruiting a diverse workforce. We are actively engaged in partnerships with local school districts, Lane Community College, and Bushnell University to continue to grow the health care workforce in Lane County. These partnerships are beneficial, and your support for further recruitment investment will enhance our state's competitive position.

To be successful in maintaining a robust health care workforce pipeline, a multifaceted set of tools is necessary. We appreciate your consideration of these tax credit bills and look forward to continued discussion about other ways in which we may partner with you to ensure we continue to grow our health care workforce.

Sincerely,

Todd Salnas | Chief Executive | PeaceHealth Oregon Network