

Submitter: Catherine Reid  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care  
Measure: SB490

Dear Oregon Legislators:

I urge you to support SB 490, which will fund the Oregon Residency Collaborative Alliance for Family Medicine. As a current family medicine resident in Hillsboro, OR, I understand the critical need to strengthen Oregon's primary care workforce and I see firsthand the value in expanding access to primary care. More than two million Oregonians live in places without enough access to health care. A 2020 study from OHSU highlighted inequitable access to primary care for Medicaid patients in rural Oregon, yet in fall 2022 Portland's wait time to see a primary care physician were the worst in the country at 44 days. My mother-in-law moved to Oregon in November 2021 and is still on the wait list to establish with a primary care provider.

Currently, Oregon graduates just 36 family physicians per year from eight residency sites around the state, five of which are rural, but that capacity is growing, and Oregon must support it. Expanded opportunity for excellent resident education is shown to have an amplifying effect on physician retention. A study on the health of US primary care released last week by the Milbank Memorial Fund cited a shrinking primary care workforce as a key driver of the widening gap in access to care. It also highlighted the need to ensure that more physicians are trained in the communities where the need is greatest.

The faculty and staff of these residency sites require the support of a robust collaborative to deliver an outstanding education. Shared faculty development opportunities, distributed research opportunities, and shared curriculum development helps to ensure their longevity and success.

I would not have known much about my current residency program if it hadn't been for ORCA-FM organizing an amazing residency fair that allowed medical students to get an in-depth look at the residency opportunities in Oregon. Hillsboro is home to many medically underserved patients and having a strong family medicine residency located here means we are able to expand access to quality primary care for those who need it the most. Great family medicine residency training allows well-rounded physicians to bring broad-spectrum health care to all corners of Oregon lifting up the communities in which we serve.

Having a community-based residency program not only increases access to primary care but it also offers our patients the most up-to-date, evidence-based care. Furthermore, patients engage with residents outside of the clinic through community

events such as advocating for preventative health at the Pasifika Unity Festival and mentoring local high school students; this allows special insight into our patient's needs. Residents have multi-specialty exposure and therefore are in a unique position to bring a fresh perspective on improving healthcare institutions that can lead to meaningful change. It is essential to support family medicine programs in Oregon to ensure their continued success and encourage aspiring physicians to pursue a career in primary care.

The factors driving our workforce crisis are multifaceted and resolving them requires collaboration across sectors and institutions. ORCA-FM, which provides resources to help ensure the success of Oregon's current training sites and of additional sites to come, is a critical part of the solution.

Catherine Reid, DO PGY1 OHSU-Hillsboro