



American Board of Family Medicine, Inc.

Quality Healthcare, Public Trust ... Setting the Standards in Family Medicine

February 28, 2023

Dear Oregon Legislators:

On behalf of the American Board of Family Medicine (ABFM), we support the Oregon Residency Collaborative Alliance for Family Medicine (ORCA-FM). As an organization whose mission is to improve the health of the public through Board Certification, Residency Training, Research, Leadership Development, and promote the development of the specialty of Family Medicine, we understand the critical need to strengthen Oregon's primary care workforce. 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.^{1,2}

Currently, Oregon graduates just 36 family physicians per year from its 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.³ 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 care⁴. 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

¹ McConnell, K.J., Charlesworth, C.J., Zhu, J.M. *et al.* Access to Primary, Mental Health, and Specialty Care: a Comparison of Medicaid and Commercially Insured Populations in Oregon. *J GEN INTERN MED* 35, 247–254 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11606-019-05439-z>

² Payerchin, Richard. "Appointment Wait Times Drop for Family Physicians, Indicating Shift in Care." www.medicaleconomics.com, Medical Economics, 13 Sept. 2022, <https://www.medicaleconomics.com/view/appointment-wait-times-drop-for-family-physicians-indicating-shift-in-care>.

³ Bazemore A. Homegrown = Home-Served: The Power of Local Training. *J Grad Med Educ.* 2016 Oct;8(4):609–612. doi: 10.4300/JGME-D-16-00388.1. PMID: 27777678; PMCID: PMC5058600.

⁴ Jabbarpour Y., Petterson S., Jetty A., Byun H., The Health of US Primary Care: A Baseline Scorecard Tracking Support for High-Quality Primary Care, The Milbank Memorial Fund and The Physicians Foundation. February 22, 2023.

opportunities, distributed research opportunities, and shared curriculum development helps to ensure their longevity and success. Our Board of Directors published an editorial in the Annals of Family Medicine last year affirming the value of networks in the work of ensuring residency transformation, and in spreading innovation and improving care. The Oregon Academy of Family physicians is in an excellent position to take on the further development of a network for Oregon's residency programs.

The factors driving our workforce crisis are multifaceted and resolving them requires collaboration across sectors and institutions. The 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.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Warren Newton". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Warren Newton, MD, MPH
President/Chief Executive Officer
American Board of Family Medicine