



February 27, 2023

RE: Letter of Support for SB 490 – Building Oregon’s Primary Care Physician Workforce

Dear Oregon Legislators:

On behalf of Southern Coos Hospital & Health Center, a 21-bed critical access hospital located in Bandon, Oregon, we urge you to support SB 490. If approved, SB 490 will provide \$5.0 million in necessary funding for the Oregon Residency Collaborative Alliance for Family Medicine (ORCA-FM). As a rural critical access hospital, serving the populations of Southern Coos County and Northern Curry County, we understand the critical need to train more primary care physicians and to strengthen Oregon’s primary care workforce. Our area is currently designated by the State of Oregon as a Health Professionals Shortage Area (HPSA) for Primary Care Providers. We are 1 of 61 medically underserved areas in the State of Oregon. In fact, at this time more than two million Oregonians live in places without enough access to health care.

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. We know for a fact that primary care physicians, when trained in a rural community, are far more likely to stay and practice in a rural community.

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.

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.

We need your support and urge you to vote in favor of SB 490.

Sincerely Yours,

Raymond T. Hino, MPA, FACHE, Chief Executive Officer
Southern Coos Hospital and Health Center