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February 8, 2023

Representative Christine Goodwin, House Committee on Health Care  
Oregon State House of Representatives  
H-386 Oregon Capitol  
900 Court Street  
Salem, Oregon 97701

Dear Vice-Chair Goodwin,

We are writing on behalf of outpatient surgery centers and patients in your district and throughout southern Oregon.

In 2019, southern Oregon surgery centers asked Representative Duane Stark to introduce legislation to fix a huge barrier to our efforts to train and hire qualified surgical technologists. The current system was simply not meeting our rural needs, and forced potential surg techs to move to Portland for two years for training that could be delivered here in our region.

The Legislature responded overwhelmingly, passing HB4106 by a 54-1 margin in the House and 27-2 margin in the Senate this past March.

Unfortunately, in the rulemaking, the Oregon Department of Justice inaccurately interpreted legislative intent, which meant that the final rules still technically require a two-year course of study, rather than in clinic education and apprenticeship. The misinterpretation stems over the location of the word "and" in section 1.

Thus, we, and rural medical providers throughout Oregon, are asking that you work with us to fix this drafting issue, so that we can get our carefully planned, safe, and robust apprenticeship program up and running to meet the needs of patients and clinics alike. We have a crisis in rural workforce issues, and we urgently need the legislature to clarify this issue for the agencies.

If you have any questions, please contact us directly, or our Capitol advocate, Doug Riggs at 503-702-5120.

Sincerely,

Daniel Nickels, ASC Director, Medical Eye Center, Medford

Randy Hubbard, Director Surgical Services, Mercy Medical Center, Roseburg

Steven Loftesness, Executive Director, Grants Pass Surgery Center, Grants Pass

Christopher D. Skagen, Executive Director, OASCA