



## **MEMORANDUM**

To: Sen. Lew Fredrick, Co-Chair, Joint Sub-Committee on Education  
Rep. Susan McLain, Co-Chair, Joint Sub-Committee on Education  
Members of the Joint Sub-Committee on Education

From: Courtni Dresser, Vice President of Government Relations

Date: May 4, 2023

Re: HB 5025 - OMA Comments in Support of Full Funding for OHSU

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The Oregon Medical Association urges your support for full funding of the School of Medicine, the Office of Rural Health, and other programs at Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU). Not funding these programs would negatively impact health care education programs that are vital to Oregonians and would further exacerbate our state's ongoing workforce shortage.

OHSU operates a nationally recognized program where physician students train with other types of providers to learn how to be part of and lead a health care team. OHSU attracts Oregonians and students from across the nation to learn to provide needed healthcare and has highly ranked programs that lead to many students staying in Oregon after their education is complete. Currently, over 70% of medical students are Oregonians.

Without the continued investment from the state to maintain these programs, Oregon's physician workforce is at risk - both to be trained in and to remain in Oregon. Investing in tomorrow's medical doctors enables the OHSU School of Medicine to keep tuition rates steady and helps lower overall student debt. According to the Association of American Medical Colleges 2020 Graduation Questionnaire, medical students face an average medical school debt of \$200,000. Debt can discourage physicians from practicing in rural and underserved areas where reimbursement rates are lower.

**The Oregon Medical Association (OMA) is the state's largest professional organization engaging in advocacy, policy, community-building, and networking opportunities for Oregon's physicians, physician assistants, medical students, and physician assistant students. The OMA's members speak with one voice as they advocate for policies that improve access to quality patient care, reduce administrative burdens on medical professionals, and improve the health of all Oregonians. Additional information can be found at [www.theOMA.org](http://www.theOMA.org).**

Key investments by the Oregon Legislature, such as the Oregon Rural Scholars Program, loan forgiveness programs, rural provider tax credit and other incentive programs help to retain Oregon trained providers to stay and practice in Oregon.

OHSU needs the legislature's continued investment in it as the only state public academic health institution to ensure it remains one of the nation's top medical schools. We cannot afford to waver in our state's commitment to health care education and growing the number of trained health care professionals.

For the reasons above, the OMA respectfully recommends that the committee approve HB 5025.

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