

Dear House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care:

I am a doctor of optometry practicing in your district and I am reaching out to ask for your support in the passage of HB 4010. The bill removes the requirement that optometrists have hospital consulting privileges in order to qualify for a rural tax credit.

Access to eye care in our area is a real issue. My practice, and my colleagues in the area, have all seen tremendous growth and high demand over the last several years. We are booking out appointments several months in advance. My practice could easily employ 2 more full time doctors in our practice today. However recruiting and retaining optometrists in our rural area can be challenging. Tax credits and student loan forgiveness are great tools in attracting and retaining physicians in our small town.

Currently the rural tax credit is not easily accessible to most optometrists. The requirement to have a hospital affiliation is an unnecessary barrier to many optometrists in rural communities. The credentialing process is arduous. It can take months or even years for small rural hospitals to establish criteria for new providers, and they often have little or no motivation to do so. HB 4010 removes section C requiring optometric physicians to maintain hospital consulting privileges to qualify.

I support expanding access to rural healthcare and HB 4010 is a positive step forward.

Thank you for your support!

Sincerely,

Samuel Kimball, OD
La Grande Family Eye Care
La Grande, OR