

March 13, 2025
Portland, Oregon

To our Oregon legislators,

We are writing in support of a request for funding to ensure the ongoing existence of Addiction Medicine physician fellowship at Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU).

Addiction medicine physicians are a critical resource for the future of substance use disorders treatment. Addiction medicine specialists differ from addiction psychiatrists in that they first complete residency training in a non-psychiatry field such as, but not limited to, internal medicine, family medicine, or obstetrics and gynecology. Compared to addiction psychiatrists, addiction medicine specialists are uniquely qualified to treat complex substance withdrawal syndromes, identify and treat medical complications of substance use, and to manage substance use and withdrawal in pregnancy.

The addiction medicine physician fellowship at OHSU provides state-of-the-art specialty training from faculty who are nationally and internationally recognized for excellence and innovation. Graduates of these programs are experts in the specialty and frequently move quickly into leadership roles within their organizations. Many have taken on teaching roles, passing on their knowledge to medical students and residents who may not specialize in addiction but will go on to care for thousands of patients. Training and retaining these physicians is vital to Oregonians' access to quality care for substance use disorders.

As of 2025 addiction physicians seeking to attain specialty certification will no longer be able to sit for the board examination without first completing a formal fellowship; that means that if the fellowship is shuttered, any new addiction medicine specialists will have to train outside the state¹. A majority of physicians remain in practice in the same state where they complete their medical training, with Oregon retaining a higher number of its in-state graduated physicians than the national average². Therefore, losing the opportunity for in-state specialty training in addiction medicine is likely to dramatically reduce the state's supply of qualified physicians in this field.

Amidst the current nationwide addiction crisis, Oregon must continue to take action to ensure all Oregonians have access to high quality and evidence-based treatment for substance use disorders. Securing the future of addiction medicine fellowship in Oregon is essential to that goal.

Sincerely,

Kate Marshall, MD, FASAM, FACP
Immediate Past President, Oregon Society of Addiction Medicine
Chief of Service, Department of Addiction Medicine, Kaiser Permanente Northwest
OHSU Addiction Medicine Fellowship Graduate, 2021

¹ American Board of Preventive Medicine, eligibility requirements.

² American Association of Medical Colleges, Physician Retention in State of Residency Training by State, 2008-2017.

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