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Department of Veterans Affairs
Southern Oregon Rehabilitation Center & Clinics (SORCC)
White City, Oregon 97503

BRINKER, MICHELLE L.L.
CHIEF OF STAFF
REP. CARL WILSON, OR HOUSE DISTRICT 03
900 COURT STREET NE RM H390
SALEM, OR 97301

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

RE: HOUSE BILL 2373

In support of expanding the Rural Health Care Income Tax Credit to include pharmacists practicing in rural areas, I would like to provide a testimonial. My name is Theodore Simmons, I currently serve as the Home-Based Primary Care Clinical Pharmacist at the VA Outpatient Clinic in Klamath Falls, OR. I care for veterans with complex medical conditions, which limit their ability to travel to care appointments. I serve as a licensed independent practitioner providing direct care to patients as part of a multidisciplinary team. I operate under a clinical scope of practice, as appointed by the Credentialing & Privileging Board of the Medical Staff at my facility. I have served as a Preceptor for P4 students from OSU/OHSU, providing experiential learning to students interested in future practice in rural areas. In addition, I have worked part-time at a number of retail pharmacies in Klamath Falls outside of my tour of duty hours with the VA.

My background includes a Doctor of Pharmacy degree from the University of Charleston (Charleston, WV); a Post-Graduate Pharmacy Residency at St. Mary's Medical Center (Huntington, WV); and a Board Certification as a Pharmacotherapy Specialist (BCPS). I have held positions in both rural and metropolitan areas of Oregon, previously having spent >2 years as a clinical pharmacist at the Portland VA Medical Center. It was my choice to leave Portland to serve Veterans in Southern Oregon. I do believe that with my background, qualifications and with the opportunities in my profession, I could easily leave my position in Klamath Falls to pursue a job in a more metropolitan setting, as I have seen with many of my colleagues and associates. Perhaps a simple tax credit would provide incentive for me to stay in the rural setting.

As you may well know, rural communities face unique barriers to healthcare such as lack of specialty care and a limited number of available local providers. The end result is very fragmented care, which often leads to poor patient outcomes. An experienced pharmacist can be a valuable resource to patients, providing continuity in care and a direct resource to patients as they manage disease states in the outpatient setting. What may not be obvious, pharmacists help reduce the burden to metropolitan resources in other areas of the state due to the prevention of re-hospitalizations and/or repeat visits with specialty providers. Please note, I believe that this tax credit will directly benefit rural communities, in addition, this tax credit will benefit both rural and metropolitan healthcare resources. We need to bring in and keep talented, experienced pharmacotherapy specialists in our rural settings. More importantly, we need to make every effort to improve the health and safety for all of our communities.

If you have any questions or concerns please contact me at (541)273-6206 ext. 1745.

Sincerely,



Theodore E. Simmons, Pharm.D., BCPS
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