

As a practicing physical therapist for the past 31 years and a voting constituent in Oregon, I would like to express my support for Western Oregon University, in their efforts to develop an on-campus Doctor of Physical Therapy program. The administrators of WOU have performed exceptional due diligence that is in agreement with my own experience indicating that we remain short for PTs in Oregon, both urban and most importantly for rural citizens. As our population ages and our life expectancies increase, we are incentivized increasingly for financial and cultural reasons to invest in services that can directly reduce our state and nation's expenditures by percentage GDP on healthcare, by reducing the disability, the caregiver burden, and the controllable health-related consequences for all persons. Physical therapy has consistently been proven to play an integral part in this objective.

For individuals with congenital impairments, such as Cerebral Palsy, PT has additionally been shown to reduce disability and healthcare expenses throughout a person's life.

For those recovering from injuries sustained in youth and young-adult sports, ranging from concussion to major surgery restoring knee integrity - PT has again been shown to reduce lifetime disability and improve productivity (return to work, safe driving, reduce use of medications).

Finally, for those recovering from major illnesses such as stroke, cancer, and even neurodegenerative diseases (Parkinson's Disease and more), PT has an evidence-basis for cost and disability reduction.

As such, I encourage the distinguished members of this committee to consider endorsing and ultimately financially supporting the program development at WOU for PT, being a service to those with professional aspirations, and to those in our community that will benefit from their presence. Ultimately, this is a clear return on investment that you as our legislators can allocate for our community's benefit.

Thank you for your consideration and ultimately, support.