

Co-Chair Frederick, Co-Chair McLain, and members of the committee,

My name is Musah Iddrisu and I am part of the Scholars for a Healthy Oregon Initiative (SHOI). SHOI is an OHSU program that offers full tuition and fees to a select number of students in exchange for at least five years of medical service in a rural or underserved part of Oregon.

I come from Sakalu, a small farming community in northwestern Ghana. I have lived in Portland since June 2015. I graduated from nursing school at OHSU School of Nursing in June 2020, earning my Bachelor of Science with major in nursing (BSN). I first heard about SHOI through the OHSU School of nursing scholarship administrator. I was looking into funding for graduate school at that time. I have practiced as a physician assistant (PA) in Ghana in a rural community. I felt that I will best serve my passion of working with rural and/or underserved communities with a family nurse practitioner training instead of a PA. I also needed help with funding to achieve my educational and professional goal of serving the most vulnerable in society. This motivated me to apply for the SHOI as it will help me fund my education as well as achieve my goal of working with rural or underserved communities. My plan postgraduate is to find a job in a rural or underserve community in Oregon and work with them.

Rural and underserved areas lack access to care, and without the SHOI program, it would be nearly impossible for underpopulated and underserved areas to attract talented doctors. Coupled with the cost of medical school and the sometimes-lower pay in these areas, taking jobs in rural or underserved areas without financial assistance would result in significant debt for providers.

There are hundreds of qualified Oregonians who are willing to serve in rural and underserved Oregon, but if the funding for SHOI is cut, then we know that these areas of our state will feel the effects. As we begin our road to recovery from the pandemic, we cannot afford to leave underserved populations behind.

We urge you to fully fund the Scholars for a Healthy Oregon Initiative so we can continue to serve some of the communities that need it the most.

Sincerely,
Musah Iddrisu
OHSU SoN
DNP FNP Class of 2023.