

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

My name is Lillian Lazenby 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.

Prior to attending medical school, I was a paramedic for 12 years. For the last four of those years I worked in the 911 system in Lincoln County, serving the rural coastal communities of Lincoln City, Depoe Bay, Newport, Toledo, Waldport, Siletz, and Otis. It was during this time in my life that I made the decision to pursue medical school, with a goal of eventually becoming an emergency medicine physician and returning to a similar area to practice at one of Oregon's critical access hospitals. I learned about SHOI during the process of applying to OHSU, and this program has been essential in allowing me to continue working towards this goal.

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,
Lillian Lazenby, MD Student, OHSU Class of 2023