

Submitter: Douglas Walker

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

Measure: HB4010

Dear Committee members:

I am a Doctor of Optometry practicing in Brookings, Oregon and I am reaching out to ask for your support in the passage of HB 4010. The bill removes the requirement that Optometrists have hospital consulting privileges in order to qualify for a rural tax credit.

To compete with more populated areas in acquiring physicians, rural communities rely upon financial incentives such as tax credits and student loan forgiveness.

To function as intended, tax credits must be easily accessible. The requirement to have a hospital affiliation is an unnecessary barrier to many Optometrists in rural communities. The credentialing process is arduous. It can take months or even years for small rural hospitals to establish criteria for new providers, and they often have little or no motivation to do so. HB 4010 removes section C requiring optometric physicians to maintain hospital consulting privileges to qualify.

As an optometrist and practice owner, I support expanding access to rural healthcare and HB 4010 is a positive step forward. Thank you for your support!