



January 27, 2025

Oregon State Legislature
House Committee on Behavioral Health and Healthcare
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Advocating for a Stronger Anesthesia Workforce: Support for HB 2591 and HB 2204

Dear Members of the House Committee on Behavioral Health and Healthcare:

On behalf of Oregon Anesthesiology Group, I am writing to express my strong support for HB 2591 and HB 2204, two critical pieces of legislation that will help stabilize and strengthen the anesthesia workforce in Oregon. Both bills are vital for addressing the growing demand for anesthesia services and ensuring that Oregonians have access to safe, high-quality care, regardless of where they live.

Support for HB 2591

- HB 2591 takes a crucial step toward ensuring that Oregon has a robust and sustainable anesthesia workforce. This bill's provisions, particularly the expansion of the rural provider tax credit to include anesthesiologists and the creation of a new tax credit for urban anesthesiologists and Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNAs), will incentivize professionals to practice in both urban and underserved rural communities. These tax credits will help alleviate the growing shortage of anesthesia providers, particularly in rural and frontier areas, where access to care can be limited.
- Additionally, the inclusion of anesthesiologists and CRNAs in the Oregon Provider Incentive Loan Repayment Program is a significant step toward reducing the financial barriers that often prevent new professionals from entering the field, especially in areas with high demand for anesthesia services. The student loan repayment program will help retain existing providers and encourage more medical professionals to choose anesthesia as a long-term career path in Oregon.

Support for HB 2204

- Our group also fully supports the provisions of HB 2204, particularly the proposed amendment to include anesthesiologists in the rural provider tax credit. This will further strengthen the incentive to work in rural areas, where access to anesthesia care is often critical for patients undergoing surgery, pain management, and other procedures. By amending HB 2204 to include anesthesiologists, we can help ensure that these essential services are available to all Oregonians, regardless of geography.

Why These Bills Matter

- The challenges of recruiting and retaining anesthesia providers in both rural and urban settings are real and growing. Anesthesia professionals play a crucial role in the healthcare system, ensuring the safety and comfort of patients during surgeries and procedures. Without the right incentives, we risk losing talented professionals to other states or fields, leaving critical gaps in our healthcare infrastructure. These bills provide necessary tools to stabilize and grow the anesthesia workforce, ensuring that all Oregonians have timely access to anesthesia services.

We urge you to support HB 2591 and HB 2204, and we appreciate your commitment to improving healthcare access in Oregon. Oregon Anesthesiology Group is ready to work alongside you to ensure that these bills become law and help create a more sustainable, robust anesthesia workforce for our state.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Michael Axley, MD, MS
President
Oregon Anesthesiology Group

ABOUT OAG

For over 36 years OAG has delivered high-quality anesthesia care to patients in Oregon. Our physician-owned practice represents 150+ anesthesiologists and 25+ nurse anesthetists who provide anesthesiology services to patients in more than 20 facilities, including hospitals, surgery centers, and office-based practices. Our strength and longevity are rooted in our commitment to attract and retain anesthesia experts who understand compassion is an inextricable part of providing expert health care. When smart, driven professionals join together for the good of the patient, the promise of high-quality health care is readily met.