

Submitter: Graham Erickson
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2204

I am an optometric physician practicing in Oregon, and teach at Pacific University College of Optometry in Forest Grove, OR. I am asking for your support in the passage of HB 2204. The bill removes the requirement that optometric physicians 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. Many of my students carefully consider practice location upon graduation, and incentives to practice in rural locations with limited access to eye care services is an important and attractive consideration.

To function as intended, tax credits must be easily accessible. The requirement to have a hospital affiliation is an unnecessary barrier to many optometric physicians 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.

We support expanding access to rural healthcare and HB 2204 is a positive step forward. Thank you for your support!