

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

To Whom it may concern:

My name is Ryan LeBreton OD, and I am an optometric physician practicing in Oregon and I am reaching out to ask for your support in the passage of HB 2204. This 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. At this time, I have been looking for an associate for over a year. I can offer the same wages if not better, but can't draw anyone into my small community. Being able to offer a tax credit could be a game changer as another reason to join small rural medical practices. As you know, the rural areas struggle for all medical providers and many times have to pay traveling ad-locums much more in salary and benefits than normal prevailing wages just to fill spots. My small optometric practice can't do that, but offering a competitive wage and the rural tax credit would be very beneficial. 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.

This seems like a no brainer bi-partisan bill that should improve healthcare and healthcare access in the rural areas of Oregon. I can't imagine why this wouldn't pass easily reaching across the isles to both parties.

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

Thank you!
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