

My name is Craig E Bowen OD, 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. Our state has a workforce problem in rural areas, passage of this bill may make it easier for rural practice to attract new doctors to care for Oregon residents.

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 bill will provide equity across the medical specialties that should improve healthcare and healthcare access in the rural areas of Oregon.

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

Thank you!