

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

I am an optometrist practicing in rural Oregon and 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.

It just so happens I'm looking to hire an optometrist to join me at my practice here in Dallas, Oregon. This bill would be greatly beneficial as I will likely hire a new grad. This will be mutually beneficial to both of us and a great incentive for them to want to join me here in the wonderful rural Oregon.

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 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!

Christopher D Johnson OD