

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

I am an optometric physician practicing in rural Oregon and I am reaching out to ask 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.

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.

I am currently practicing in rural Oregon and am credentialed with a local hospital.

Based on my personal experience, I do not feel that the credentialing of optometric providers at hospitals is necessary due to the often lack of access to necessary equipment in these facilities. Our optometrists are better equipped at their own offices and often work closely with providers in the hospital to refer to our clinics, which I feel is a much more effective version of health care. Although hospital credentialing can be useful in rare cases, it is not commonly needed and should not be a barrier to a tax incentive for optometric physicians.

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