

Submitter: Patricia Gates
On Behalf Of: Oregon Optometric Physicians Association
Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health
Care
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2204

I am an optometric physician practicing in Coos Bay since 1988, 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 our many rural communities. The credentialing process is arduous: it can often take months or even years for small rural hospitals to establish criteria for new providers, and they often have little or no incentive to do so.

I support expanding access to rural healthcare and HB 2204 is a positive step forward. Thank you for your consideration of this timely issue in our communities.

Sincerely,
Patricia B Gates, OD