

Submitter: Jay Walker

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2204

I am an optometric physician practicing in Molalla, Oregon and Milwaukie Oregon. I have been in practice more than 30 years, providing routine and emergency eye care to my communities. As an eyecare specialist I am important part of our community health care delivery team, and I work closely with local physicians to care for our citizens.

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

Sincerely,

Jay W. Walker, OD
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