



Oregon Office of Rural Health

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Chair Patterson, Vice Chair Hayden, Members of the Committee.

My name is Robert Duehmig, I am the Director of the Oregon Office of Rural Health (ORH). The ORH has a workforce team that includes a full-time provider recruiter and staff that administers various provider incentive programs, including loan repayment and loan forgiveness. We also have a team that provides technical assistance to rural hospitals, clinics, EMS as well as population health-based assistance.

The ORH has worked closely with rural public health and worked with the Coalition of Local Health Officials (CLHO) to strengthen the partnerships between our rural health delivery system and our public health officials. Health is more than just clinical. Health is ensuring our communities are safe. Public health, like all health care fields, is facing a workforce shortage.

Community Health Workers (CHW) are an important part of Oregon's health care workforce -in clinical and public health. CHW provide important care and support to members of our community in a variety of setting, including mental and behavioral health to hospice, from clinics to public health departments. CHW are key to our increasing access to care in our communities. The ORH has worked with CLHO and OHA to support the education of CHW. We have created the Rural Oregon CHW Network, a peer- to -peer program to foster collaboration, communication and support across rural Oregon.

Community paramedicine (CP) continues to grow as an important component of our health care workforce. CP can work across lines to support the important work of our EMS services as well as support the care of our rural residents through community care, reducing 911 calls and unnecessary emergency room visits. This is important in rural communities where EMS service can be delayed due to distance and workforce shortages.

ORH supports investment in the public health, CHW and community paramedicine workforce.