

Submitter: Ryan Hellums
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health
Care
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2357

Thank you for your consideration of my testimony. I am a head and neck surgical oncologist, in the Department of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery, at Oregon Health & Science University. Head and neck cancer patients comprise the large majority of patients under our care. We primarily serve patients in the state of Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana, Alaska, and northern California. Many of our patients reside in low-resource regions that are not equipped with the services that we are fortunate to offer. Our multidisciplinary program includes the vital support of speech language pathologists (SLP) who specialize in the care of patients undergoing treatment for head and neck cancer, which frequently is associated with significant speech, voice, and swallowing impairment, as a necessary consequence of life-saving efforts. Our SLP team has been invaluable in the care of thousands of head and neck cancer patients, before, during, and long-term after their cancer treatments to help them achieve the best quality of life that they possibly can reach. With our broad geographical catchment area, we are strongly in need of participation in the interstate compact so that our SLP colleagues can provide longitudinal care to patients, as their work nearly always requires an ongoing relationship with patients, again to maximize the quality of life they can achieve. I can say for certain that our SLP team has one of the greatest impacts on our head and neck patients lives. Thank you for your consideration, many patients will benefit from this compact.