

February 17, 2025

Chair Reynolds and Members of the Senate Committee on Early Childhood and Behavioral Health,

My name is Dr Josh Reagan, and I am one of the faculty at Providence Oregon Family Medicine Residency Program, a program that trains family medicine doctors to be Oregon's future primary care and obstetrical care providers. I am writing to you to ask you to vote yes on SB 693, to create a task force to improve the perinatal workforce in Oregon.

You are aware that Oregon is experiencing a perinatal workforce shortage that is a major stressor for hospitals, clinics and providers, as well as for patients. As a family physician who provides, and teaches, obstetrical care, I'm aware of the benefits of bringing family physicians into communities. Not only do family physicians provide full spectrum care across the lifespan, which is especially important in rural communities, we also are able, with appropriate training, to provide full spectrum obstetrical care.

Family physicians are accustomed to working with individuals but are also trained to consider emerging health needs in local communities overall. In residency we are taught newborn care, adult medicine, prenatal care, perinatal care and postpartum care, in both hospital and clinic settings. I love the families I care for, and it is exciting to care for such amazing people in such a broad variety of settings. Working with pregnant moms and families to safely and lovingly help facilitate the birth of their baby is a remarkable joy, it still feels magical after 25 years. Not only do I feel lucky to do this kind of exciting work, but I also believe what we provide is necessary to improve care as well as reduce costs in medical settings. Family physicians are not the only way to help improve the perinatal workforce to improve care of Oregon's birthing families and babies, but we are certainly an important part of the puzzle.

In summary, thinking and planning explicitly about how to fill in the gaps around perinatal health care is important, and is less likely to happen organically. I believe a large portion of these gaps can be filled by family physicians. Please vote yes on SB 693 to act on the currently stressed perinatal work force in Oregon so that we can create some solutions. Thank you for the work you do to support the health of mothers, babies and their larger families.

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