



February 25, 2025

Chair Patterson, Vice Chairs Hayden and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons of Oregon (OPSO) and the over 2,500 osteopathic physicians and medical students we represent, we strongly support Senate Bill 609, a crucial step toward improving access to primary care and ensuring equitable health outcomes for all Oregonians. Osteopathic physicians are committed to comprehensive, patient-centered care that prioritizes prevention and continuity of care—values that align directly with the intent of this legislation.

Primary care is the foundation of a healthy community. Increased access to primary care physicians has been consistently linked to better patient outcomes, longer life expectancy, and lower overall costsⁱ; however, the erosion of primary care access due to inadequate reimbursement rates, and administrative burdens threatens the well-being of our most vulnerable populations as fewer physicians choose primary care specialties due to these economic disincentives.

When patients are unable to secure timely and comprehensive preventive services provided by primary care physicians, manageable conditions such as diabetes and hypertension progress can go unchecked, leading to increased emergency department visits and hospitalizations—costly interventions that could have been prevented with appropriate primary care. This is particularly concerning given that 57% of Oregon's children rely on the Oregon Health Plan (OHP) for their healthcare needs. Without action, the disparity in access and quality of care will only deepen.

By establishing minimum reimbursement rates for primary care, dental, behavioral health, and optometry services, Oregon can take a concrete step toward reversing the decline in primary care access. This will encourage more physicians to enter and remain in primary care specialties and ultimately reduce healthcare costs through improved prevention and chronic disease management.

We urge your support

Sincerely,

David Walls
Executive Director – Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons of Oregon

ⁱ <https://med.stanford.edu/news/all-news/2019/02/more-primary-care-physicians-lead-to-longer-life-spans.html>