



World Education Services Statement of Support for SB 476

World Education Services (WES) supports SB 476, that seeks to address the shortage of physicians and other health care providers in the state by creating an alternative pathway to licensure for qualified internationally educated individuals and establishing the Internationally Educated Workforce Reentry Grant Program.

The United States currently faces a serious shortage of practicing physicians¹ in both primary and specialty care—a gap that is projected to widen over the coming decade. States across the country are seeking a way to ensure that all citizens, especially those in rural and underserved communities, have sufficient access to medical care. In Oregon, more than 800,000 people live in 150 federally designated primary care Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs). Oregon needs an additional 107 primary care practitioners to meet the state’s current health care needs.²

International medical graduates are well-positioned to help alleviate physician shortages across the state. Their cultural competence is also an asset, as studies have found that patient outcomes improve when health care teams are more diverse.³ Legislation that expands access to medical licensure for international medical graduates and other internationally educated individuals with training in other areas of health care would allow the state to benefit from the education, skills, and experience of a larger pool of qualified practitioners.

SB 476 will help address Oregon’s physician shortage, ensure a more diverse health workforce, and promote access to quality care for all state residents by making licensing pathways more accessible for internationally trained physicians in the state.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this statement of support.

¹ “AAMC Report Reinforces Mounting Physician Shortage.” Association of American Medical Colleges, (June 11, 2021). <https://www.aamc.org/news/press-releases/aamc-report-reinforces-mounting-physician-shortage>.

² “Designated Health Professional Shortage Areas Statistics: First Quarter of Fiscal Year 2024 Designated HPSA Quarterly Summary.” Bureau of Health Workforce, Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, (December 31, 2024). <https://data.hrsa.gov/default/generatchpsaquarterlyreport>.

³ L E Gomez and Patrick Bernet. “Diversity improves performance and outcomes.” National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health, (August 2019). <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/30765101>.



WES is a non-profit social enterprise that supports the educational, economic, and social inclusion of immigrants, refugees, and international students. For 50 years, WES has set the standard for international academic credential evaluation, supporting millions of people as they seek to achieve their academic and professional goals. Through decades of experience as a leader in global education, WES has developed a wide range of tools to pursue social impact at scale. From evaluating academic credentials to shaping policy, designing programs, and providing philanthropic funding, we partner with a diverse set of organizations, leaders, and networks to uplift individuals and drive systems change. Together with its partners, WES enables people to learn, work, and thrive in new places.