



March 13, 2025

Chair Lew Frederick
Oregon State Senate
900 Court St. NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Vice Chair Suzanne Weber
Oregon State Senate
900 Court St. NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Dear Chair Frederick, Vice Chair Weber and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP), which represents more than 128,000 family physicians and medical students across the country, I write to express the AAFP's support for SB 443, which will fund the Oregon Residency Collaborative Alliance for Family Medicine (ORCA-FM). This bill will provide much needed resources for family medicine residency training program directors, faculty and residents.

The AAFP has long been concerned about the shortage of primary care physicians in the U.S., particularly the supply of family physicians, who provide comprehensive, longitudinal primary care services for patients across the lifespan, including chronic disease management, treatment of acute illnesses, and preventive care. Currently in Oregon, there are nearly two million people who live in medically underserved areas and there are 44 areas in the state designated as Health Professional Shortage Areas.

We know that rural capacity is growing, and Oregon must support it. We know most physicians are trained at large academic medical centers in urban areas, and evidence indicates physicians typically practice within 100 miles of their residency program. As a result, expanding resident education in underserved areas will help address the shortage and maldistribution of physicians in Oregon.

ORCA-FM is a network of Oregon's Family Medicine residencies. With the help of generous state funding, within the last year, ORCA-FM has reached several organizational milestones including establishment as an independent 501c(3), hiring an Executive Director, and development of organizational infrastructure necessary including fiscal controls and policies. ORCA-FM is also enhancing its programming to recruit and support exceptional medical students and residents.

The faculty and staff of these residency sites require the support of a robust collaborative to deliver an outstanding education. Shared faculty development opportunities, distributed research opportunities, and shared curriculum development helps to ensure their longevity and success.

The factors driving our workforce crisis are multifaceted and resolving them requires collaboration across sectors and institutions. Continued investment in ORCA-FM, which provides resources to help ensure the success of Oregon's current training sites and of additional sites to come, is a critical part of the solution.

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We look forward to working with you to move this legislation forward. For more information, please contact Julie Harrison, Senior Manager of State Affairs and Member Advocacy at AAFP at jharrison@aafp.org.

Sincerely,

Steve Furr, M.D., FAAFP

Steven P. Furr, MD, FAAFP
Board Chair, American Academy of Family Physicians