



Date: March 22, 2025
RE: Letter of support for SB 443
Building Oregon's Primary Care Physician Workforce
Sponsor: Sen. Patterson

Dear Honorable Senators:

Oregon needs family physicians to help serve in the medical work force to provide primary care and to offset the looming retirements of many current primary care physicians in Oregon. Family Physicians are particularly well suited for this role given our broad scope of training, commitment to caring for patients from newborns to the elderly and ability to care for communities that are more rural and or underserved in nature.

ORCA-FM was established in 2018 to help increase the number of family medicine residency training positions in Oregon and has helped add two new training programs (Roseburg, Hillsboro) as well as two new rural tracks (Newport, Madras) and helped add 3 more rural spots in Klamath Falls. In just 5 years, ORCA has helped increase the total number of family physician residents training in Oregon from 124 to 182 spots.

ORCA-FM has played a significant role in helping to recruit these residents to our residency programs by supporting our annual virtual recruitment week as well as providing learning opportunities for medical students interested in family medicine. ORCA-FM continues to provide resources for our family medicine residents throughout their training and during their job searches.

As the founding Program Director in Hillsboro, we opened our residency program in 2021 with a mission to train eight family medicine residents per year (24 total in the program) who were interested in learning family medicine in a community hospital setting and who hoped to practice in rural and/or underserved areas upon completion of their training, ideally in Oregon.

For our first 2 graduating classes:

- 100% have passed their boards
- 85% of the Class of 2024 practice in Oregon
- 75% of the Class of 2025 will practice in Oregon (2 others will work in nearby Tri Cities, WA)
- Several grads work or plan to work in Newport, Prineville, Drain and Forest Grove

As current Vice President of ORCA-FM who has been involved in graduate medical education since 2001, I have seen two different states utilize state funding to supporting family medicine residencies to improve their workforces. Supporting SB 443 for \$1.5 million to continue the great work ORCA-FM has done to date will help support the future of the healthcare workforce in Oregon. One could argue that our family physician retention successes have already offset the costs of ORCA-FM, since finding six doctors from outside Oregon to practice in these rural areas are estimated to cost close to \$250,000 per physician in recruitment costs.

Thank you for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mary K. Nordling".

Mary K. Nordling, MD FAAFP
Program Director – OHSU Hillsboro Medical Center Family Medicine Residency
Associate Professor – OHSU Department of Family Medicine
ORCA-FM Vice President of the Board