



THREE RIVERS HEALTH CENTER
150 S WALL ST
COOS BAY, OR 97420
P: (541) 435-7200 F: (541) 888-0025



April 16, 2025

Joint Ways and Means Education Subcommittee
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court St. NE, Salem, OR 97301

Dear Co-Chairs Sollman and Ruiz and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of Three Rivers Health Center and the Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw Indians' (CTCLUSI), I write to urge full support for Community College Support Fund at \$920 million for the 2025-27 biennium. The health and wellness of the tribal families and community members that we care for at Three Rivers Health Center depends on a skilled workforce to address their complex health needs. Oregon's community colleges are essential to creating a workforce pipeline that is educated and prepared to address local medical and behavioral health needs (mental health and substance use). Due to our rural and isolated location, we have difficulty with recruiting skilled workers to serve our patients. We look to our local community college, Southwestern Oregon Community College, to provide skilled medical and behavioral health professionals who receive a comprehensive education, internships, and leave their programs of study with credentials that allow them to work within our medical and behavioral health programs. Without the local community college, the health of our community and the ability of the local medical and behavioral health industry would have significant difficulty providing the care needed for our population.

As you may know, Oregon has a critical shortage of behavioral health professionals, and the community colleges are taking action more than any other public institution to address this issue in Oregon. Community colleges create a local pipeline for the behavioral health workforce and help us to recruit and retain local talent. With the demand for behavioral health services continuing to increase in our area, there is a substantial need to expand the capacity to offer those services for our community. For that, we will need a growing skilled workforce in the coming years. This funding will directly enable CTCLUSI to expand its services and increase access to behavioral health services for tribal members and the local community. I respectfully request that you fully fund the Community College Support Fund at \$920 million to ensure our community colleges have the resources to train the skilled workers the tribe and community's health needs. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Kelli Bosak, LCSW
Behavioral Health Director
Three Rivers Health Center