

NEWS RELEASE

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Oregon Graduate Medical Education Consortium Created to Establish Residency Programs in Rural and Underserved Areas

Roseburg, OR – Like other states across the country, Oregon faces a critical primary care physician shortage. A recent study estimates the need for an additional 1,726 physicians (all specialties), 332 nurse practitioners, and 168 physician assistants in Oregon. Clearly, Oregon is in critical need of a solution.

To address this need, hospitals, health systems, physician groups and both Oregon medical schools have come together to form the Oregon Graduate Medical Education (GME) Consortium. Consortium members agree that urgent steps must be taken to ensure rural Oregonians, as well as those from underserved communities, have access to doctors when they need them. Consortium Board members will be announced on November 19th in Roseburg.

“When physicians complete their residencies in rural locations, it is more likely they will stay and establish practices in those communities. Unfortunately, in 2011, Oregon had only 8.4 primary care residents per 100,000 population, ranking the state fortieth in the nation. This is why the Oregon GME Consortium will focus on establishing new or expanding existing residency programs to address the coming physician shortage,” explains Cathryn Cushing, Executive Director for the Oregon GME Consortium.

To meet the demand for primary care due to a growing and aging population and those newly insured under the Affordable Care Act, a thirty-eight percent increase in the primary care physician workforce is needed in Oregon by 2030¹.

¹ “Oregon: Projecting Primary Care Physician Workforce”, Robert Graham Center, 2013..

“Increasing the number of primary care providers is important for the health of Oregonians, especially those in rural areas,” Cushing continues. “Primary care physicians improve outcomes for patients and patient care while lowering cost. The Oregon GME Consortium will help Oregon achieve this winning strategy.”

What: Official announcement of the Oregon GME Consortium members at Umpqua Community College

When: November 19th, 10:30am

Where: Umpqua Community College, Lang Center Room 204, 1140 Umpqua College Road, Roseburg, Oregon 97470

Contact: Cathryn Cushing, Executive Director, Oregon GME Consortium, 503-804-9171

Background:

The Oregon Legislature’s Healthcare Workforce Committee recommended the development of a statewide, inclusive primary care GME Consortium and stated in a 2014 report that “a GME Consortium would allow all those who would benefit from a community-based primary care residency program to participate, to share the risks and rewards and support each other through the process.”

To implement this recommendation, the Oregon GME Planning Group formed. Planning Group members include representatives from both of Oregon’s medical schools, OHSU and the College of Osteopathic Medicine of the Pacific Northwest (COMP-Northwest), two health systems, the Oregon Health Authority, the Area Health Education Center of Southwest Oregon (AHECSW), and several experts in Family Medicine GME. The group selected Tripp Umbach, a Pittsburgh-based consulting firm, to guide the development of the Consortium.

The Consortium is working to develop a funding model for new residency programs. Currently, Federal programs from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) provide payments for graduate

medical education, but those payments fall short of covering program costs. Consortium members will contribute financially to support the development of the program, however, additional support is envisioned to come from the state as well as from community and philanthropic organizations. Benefits to members are seen through increased access to qualified healthcare providers, a decrease in recruiting costs, improved access for patients, and a decrease in provider turnover.

Through the Consortium, new primary care residency programs in many areas of the state will be created. The residency programs will be structured in agreement with standards of the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education. These programs will allow medical school graduates to remain in Oregon to complete their residency training.

The consortium model is relatively new. Georgia has developed a GME consortium, and a similar project is currently underway in Indiana.

For more information about the Oregon GME Consortium, contact Cathryn Cushing at (503) 804-9171 or cathryncushing@Oregongmec.org.