



City of Brookings

898 Elk Drive, Brookings, OR 97415

(541) 469-2163 Fax (541) 469-3650

www.brookings.or.us

Oregonians for Rural Health
522 SE Washington Avenue, Suite 107
Roseburg, OR 97470

February 10, 2016

We are pleased to join the coalition of Mayors and City Managers in support of the construction of a regional medical college in Roseburg, Oregon.

Southern Oregon needs long-term solutions to revitalize our ailing economy. Our once robust timber industry has dwindled over the last 40 years, resulting in unemployment rates consistently higher than state and national averages. Renewal of federal timber payments that have provided relief to our region will soon end.

Adding to economic hardships, growing shortages of healthcare professionals are limiting access to critical physical and mental health services. Building a regional medical college to train tomorrow's healthcare workforce will serve as a new economic engine for our region, while ensuring healthcare access.

While Oregon's statewide economy continues to improve post-recession, widespread disparities in unemployment rates and job growth exist between urban and rural areas. Capitalizing on healthcare's largely "recession proof" vitality will provide jobs, local revenue and greater long-term economic stability. The proposed medical college will have a net positive impact on retaining and attracting business to our region by providing well-trained professionals to deliver essential healthcare services.

Southern Oregon is experiencing a large exodus of its youth and young families as they leave in search of jobs elsewhere. Yet, job vacancies exist in a range of healthcare fields and are projected to grow. Low education levels and the lack of local training opportunities are part of the problem. The region needs new job training opportunities that give our youth and young families a reason to stay and for others to relocate to the region.



City of Brookings

898 Elk Drive, Brookings, OR 97415

(541) 469-2163 Fax (541) 469-3650

www.brookings.or.us

Most of Oregon's Southern and Rural counties are in fragile healthcare situations, experiencing provider shortages in both physical and mental care. Many cities are considered to be in medically-underserved areas. And, demand for healthcare services is projected to increase both in our region and nationally.

Here in Brookings...the largest City in Oregon without a hospital or Emergency Room...there is a critical need for basic medical services to support an aging community. A large percentage of Brookings residents are retirees...veteran retirees...whose health care needs are largely unmet locally. Health care professionals in our area repeatedly advise us of the critical shortage of healthcare workers. We also look forward to the opportunity for collaboration between a medical college in Roseburg and the healthcare worker education program offered in Brookings by Southwestern Oregon Community College.

Sincerely,


Ron Hedenskog, Mayor



Gary Milliman, City Manager

Cc: Mayor and City Council
Lance Colley, City Manager, Roseburg