

# ***Oregonians for Rural Health***

## **A new path for Southern & Rural Oregon... regional medical college is an investment in prosperity and growth**

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. And, adding to economic hardships, growing shortages of healthcare professionals are limiting access to critical physical and mental health services.

Today, we stand at a crossroads. Innovative solutions are needed to put us on a path toward prosperity and growth. 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.

### **Economic Renewal Now**

Oregon's state economy continues to improve post-recession, but 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. Plus, the 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.

### **Create Job Training Opportunities**

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.

### **Reverse Healthcare Shortages & Ensure Access**

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. A "silver tsunami" of soon-to- retire baby boomers will put an even greater strain on our healthcare system. A minimum of 350,000 new healthcare professionals in the college's target medical fields will be needed in the western U.S. by 2022. It is projected that Oregon alone will need over 11,000 new nurses over the next six years.

## **Southern Oregon City Managers & Mayors**

Ken Brouillard



Mayor

City of Myrtle Creek

