



SOUTHWESTERN

AN OREGON COMMUNITY COLLEGE

April 25, 2016


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

We are pleased to join the coalition of educators, community leaders, healthcare providers and others in expanding workforce training and career opportunities through a **regional allied health collaborative** based in Roseburg, Oregon. Southwestern Oregon Community College endorses the concept of a medical university center model which has staff that coordinates developing degrees for southern Oregon students that are currently not available or accessible. This would include working with the four-year colleges and OHSU to bring degrees in different allied health fields to southern Oregon that currently are not available or to create applied baccalaureate degrees through the community colleges that could provide a pathway to reach employment needs and demands by offering a four-year degree that a university doesn't want to develop and offer.

The southern Oregon Coast, like many other rural communities across the region, is already facing healthcare provider shortages in multiple medical disciplines. Currently, 33% of all healthcare workers on the South Coast are over the age of 55. Oregon's healthcare industry consistently tops the list of total job vacancies, as well as difficult-to-fill jobs, among economic sectors in the State. As expected, the rates of difficult-to-fill healthcare jobs are especially high in southern and rural Oregon as recently confirmed by the Oregon Employment Department's 2015 Job Vacancy Survey Report. The reason is largely due to the lack of applicants and qualified candidates.

Building a pipeline of healthcare professionals at all levels for our region will ensure residents have access to healthcare and jobs, while helping to revitalize our regional economy. We look forward to collaborating with the regional allied health group to provide advanced job training through the community colleges by offering lower division courses, degrees and certificates. These degrees and certificates can be articulated with four-year colleges to provide seamless transfer for students who want to move to their upper division course work.

Sincerely,



Patricia M. Scott, Ed.D.
President

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Southwestern is an equal opportunity employer and educator.