

## FACT SHEET: Healthcare Workforce Initiative, Data Collection

**Concept:** SB 457A will implement a data collection program using the health professions' licensing process and provide routine data analysis so Oregon has ongoing capacity to: (1) understand Oregon's health care workforce; (2) inform public and private educational and workforce investments; and (3) inform policy recommendations for the Governor's Office, legislative leadership and state agencies regarding Oregon's health care workforce. This is a key recommendation of the Oregon Health Fund Board to better target investment in workforce development as Oregon faces increasing population needs and declining numbers of healthcare providers.

**Purpose:** An effective health care delivery system requires an adequate supply and distribution of qualified health providers. However, understanding the needs of the state is limited by lack of consistent, comparable health care workforce data over time. Also, past Oregon provider workforce surveys and information from the Oregon Health and Sciences University suggest an increasing number of physicians retiring or leaving practice without adequate replacements being trained. Oregon, like most of the country, is facing an aging "baby boomer" population with increased chronic disease health care needs that will potentially overwhelm the current health care workforce.

The Governor's Office, the Senate Subcommittee on Health Care Reform and other stakeholders have confirmed the need for ongoing collection of consistent, comparable health care workforce data and have identified the health professions' licensing process as a means to collect demographic and practice characteristics data. Currently, only the Oregon State Board of Nursing employs this type of model to collect data on the state's nursing workforce.

Specifically, the State would coordinate with the Oregon Healthcare Workforce Institute and respective licensing boards to:

- Routinely collect data via questions regarding demographic and practice characteristics included on the health professions' initial and renewal licensure applications.
- Analyze data and disseminate annual reports regarding Oregon's licensed health professionals' workforce and workplace characteristics.
- Work with the Oregon Office for Health Policy and Research, Oregon's Area Health Education Center and other state and private workforce and education research entities to identify data needs, provide data analysis and to provide routine reports.
- Work with the Department of Human Services, Office of Rural Health and other government agencies to provide information and analyses necessary to leverage federal health care funding.
- Increase representation of minorities in the healthcare and public health workforce.
- Work with the Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development, Oregon University System, Oregon Health & Science University, Department of Education and the Workforce Investment Board to provide information necessary to inform investments in health care workforce education and development and to increase cultural competence for all healthcare providers.
- Serve as a public clearinghouse for data obtained from the health professions licensing boards. Develop and maintain a public website to make information available on Oregon's health care workforce and workplace characteristics.

Implementing this data collection program using the health professions' licensing process will provide consistent, comparable information so Oregon has ongoing capacity to: (1) understand Oregon's health

care workforce; (2) inform public and private educational and workforce investments; and (3) inform policy recommendations for the Governor’s Office, legislative leadership and state agencies regarding Oregon’s health care workforce.

SB 457A addresses a key initiative to better understand Oregon’s health care workforce shortages. Collecting consistent, comparable data on demographic and practice characteristics through the health professions’ licensing process can inform policy recommendations for the state regarding Oregon’s health care workforce. The work of the Oregon Health Fund Board calls out the need to revitalize primary care and transform the delivery system toward a patient-centric high value, high quality system. Provider supply is a necessary ingredient to that vision. Over time, this initiative will interact and upgrade Oregon’s ability to target its provider training, recruitment and retention efforts.

**Impact if Not Approved:** Oregon would continue to make large health care investments in purchasing services for Medicaid and state employee population with crude estimates of workforce capacity to provide those services. Adequate workforce, particularly primary care services, is critical to health care reform. Even in the absence of health care reform, access to adequate primary care is essential for the vulnerable low-income Medicaid population and if inadequate can lead to increased costs and fragmented care by seeking care through hospital emergency departments. In addition, with an aging “baby boomer” population across the state, creating incentives to attract and retain providers is critical to attaining high quality, low cost access to health care for Medicaid clients, state employees and all Oregonians.

**Other Possible Solutions:** There are periodic surveys funded by Medicaid in partnership with the Oregon Medical Association and OHPR to collect and analyze workforce data, in addition to some national sources. In all cases, the data is often outdated by the time it is made available, and, as a result of lower than optimal survey return rates, may not be a representative sample. National data are often too limited to allow for sub-state or regional analysis of workforce needs. Surveys are expensive and health care providers are difficult to survey as it adds to their administrative burden. Coupling data collection with routine activities such as license renewal limits the administrative burden on providers and allows for consistent, comparable information to use for policymaking.

**Fiscal Impact:** \$473,961 Total Funds (\$473,961 General Fund)

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