

From: Christina Howard <chowardpt@me.com>

Date: April 11, 2019 8:35:36 AM

To: rep.barbarasmithwarner@oregonlegislature.gov

Subject: Community Colleges train Physical Therapist Assistants

Dear Senator Smith Warner,

The Oregon Physical Therapy Association supports an increase in funding for community college career technical education (CTE) programs. Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) is one of many two-year health career degree programs that provide locally-trained personnel who are prepared with the requisite academic credentials to become licensed providers. Oregon has two PTA programs, and these programs depend on revenue from the general fund and transfer programs to provide the resources for meeting national accreditation standards. The state's investment in CTE must include the additional \$70M to expand our CTE capacity in order to meet projected healthcare workforce needs.

Oregon is projecting approximately 30% Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) growth in the next ten years, which represents 117 annual openings. Students in Oregon who want to fill one of these PTA positions must attend one of two accredited, Associate of Applied Science Physical Therapist Assistant programs offered by our community colleges. Student internships through these programs foster relationships between students and employers in their home communities, resulting in a college-to-work pipeline that supports economic and physical therapist practice development. Small private practices and larger healthcare organizations depend on our community colleges to provide a dependable and local physical therapy workforce, and additional CTE funding will increase and sustain our capacity to meet the healthcare needs in our communities.

Students who successfully complete their AAS PTA and pass a national licensing examination can expect to earn a median annual income of \$61,143 in Oregon. Living wages and a healthy population are economic drivers for growth and innovation. Investing in their education now will yield a return on investment in the communities where they live and work.

Thank you for your consideration and please feel free to contact me if you would like to discuss our position further.

Sincerely,

Christina Howard, PT, MPT

Oregon Physical Therapy Association President