



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Owens, Breese-Iverson, McLane Call on OHA to Seek Emergency Funding to Prevent Rural Health Closures

OREGON – Representative Mark Owens (R-Crane), Representative Vikki Breese-Iverson (R-Prineville), and Senator Mike McLane (R-Powell Butte) are urging the Oregon Health Authority to submit an Emergency Board funding request to stabilize rural health care providers and prevent further closures across Oregon.

Rural communities are already losing access to essential health services. Assisted living and long-term care facilities in Lakeview have closed. Labor and delivery services in Baker County are no longer available. Mental and behavioral health providers in Eastern Oregon are warning that funding instability could force additional closures.

Many rural providers operate on thin margins while serving high numbers of Oregon Health Plan, Medicaid, Medicare, and senior patients. When reimbursements don't cover costs, losses can't be absorbed. Services are cut or eliminated, and sometimes facilities close entirely. These closures are not isolated and reflect a systemic breakdown in rural health funding. Once lost, local care is hard to replace, forcing patients to travel long distances or delay treatment.

Owens, Breese-Iverson, and McLane are asking OHA to bring forward an Emergency Board request focused on keeping existing providers open while longer-term solutions are developed. The request should prioritize:

- Stabilizing rural hospitals and clinics at risk of closure
- Preserving maternity and labor and delivery services
- Supporting hospice, long-term care, and primary care providers
- Maintaining access to mental and behavioral health services in rural Oregon

Access to health care should not depend on geography. Rural families, seniors, and OHP members rely on local providers for timely, safe care. Without immediate action, more communities risk losing services they cannot easily replace.

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