

**OREGON ACADEMY OF FAMILY PHYSICIANS
CONGRESS OF THE MEMBERS
78th ANNUAL MEETING
May 31, 2025
Portland, Oregon**

REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Mission Statement: The OAFP exists to support family physicians in their pursuit of optimal health for the people of Oregon.

The Commission on External Affairs (EAC) has met monthly in the interim between legislative sessions and every other week during the legislative session. Given the OAFP's strategic focus on calling more attention to the challenges that beset primary care, it has been a busy year.

Since the last annual meeting, successes have included:

- Successful Day at the Capitol in March, where we welcomed more than 40 attendees and met with most of the legislators representing their districts
- Increased media engagement including (among several other placements and interviews):
 - OAFP President Eva McCarthy, DO and President-Elect Jane Akpangbo, MD, and Betsy Boyd-Flynn were interviewed for *Think Out Loud* in November, 2024
 - OAFP submitted neutral comments on the proposed OAFP and Legacy Health merger, advocating for a focus on primary care for the resulting organization; this led directly to three media requests and subsequent articles in the Oregonian, Portland Business Journal, and Lund report about aspects of the primary care system
 - May 5th op-ed from Brian Frank in the Corvallis and Albany newspapers to coincide with the presentation at the Oregon Health Policy Board by Betsy Boyd-Flynn and other primary care advocates
- Placing more family physicians and advocates in more in state-level health policymaking seats, including the Universal Health Plan Governing Board and subcommittees, the Medicaid Advisory Committee, the Prescription Drug Affordability Board, among others
- Collecting allies and hosting several meetings of stakeholders to work on primary care policy in service of the OAFP Strategic Plan
- Consulting with national experts including Dr. Kevin Grumbach at UCSF helping us begin to collect patient stories, and Dr. Wayne Altman at Tufts to help us shape the conversation about what comes next for the Primary Care Payment work in Oregon

- Influencing and helping populate panels on primary care topics through the *Oregon Health Forum*
- Advancing our work to cultivate primary care champions in the legislature
 - Working with Senator Reynolds on payment legislation and preparing for interim work on fixes
 - Deepening our relationship with Senator Patterson through events like the informational hearing on Primary Care Workforce held on 5/15, where ORCA-FM Executive Director Jackie Wirz talked about the impact family medicine residencies can have on workforce
 - Securing an informational hearing on the state of primary care for the House Behavioral Health and Health Committee on 5/27/25
- Supporting ORCA-FM's Policy Scholars program for the fifth year in a row
- Supporting members in their advance of legislation on key issues such as the corporate practice of medicine, appropriate treatment for patients with sickle-cell anemia; supporting independent practice, and more

Things we're tracking:

Problem: Our workforce is wobbling. There's a mismatch between patient access to primary care and state estimates of capacity. Family medicine residency programs continue to need support through ORCA-FM.

Action: Our top-priority bill this session has been SB 440, to continue funding for the Oregon Residency Collaborative Alliance for Family Medicine. The bill has been widely supported; allocating funding to it in a difficult budget year will require continued effort. We're driving the conversation about the need to count Oregon's primary care workforce more accurately.

Problem: Increasing consolidation and "market capture" of clinical facilities by private-equity firms.

Action: One of our priority bills this session is SB 951, also called the Corporate Practice of Medicine Bill. We have worked hard to support this bill, and others

Problem: Oregon's legislative primary care champions have moved on, and we need to help a new generation of legislators understand the value and fragility of primary care

Action: We are driving conversation in multiple forums, both public and private, to call attention to the urgent need to reduce administrative demands on primary care clinics and working with multiple legislators to offer expertise

What we do:

- Advise and direct staff in collaboration with the executive committee with prioritizing collaboration opportunities with external organizations, including task forces, workgroups, and coalitions
- Review and consider legislation and rulemaking efforts at the state level, and where necessary, at the national level in coordination with the AAFP.
- Help to shape the OAFP legislative agenda and long-term policy strategy in alignment with the OAFP strategic plan
- Assist members with the drafting and submission of resolutions for the Congress of Members.
- Help to recruit and support additional members to participate in the OAFP Legislative Day at the Capitol.

We say this every year, but it's still true.

We are actively seeking new members of the committee. We encourage members who want to track our advocacy updates to sign up for the Advocacy Update; during legislative sessions, OAFP staff send these updates weekly with a recap of developments related to key bills of interest to OAFP.

Contact Betsy or Brian Frank if you'd like to learn more about the committee or to be added to the list.

Respectfully submitted,
Brian Frank, MD
Chair, Commission on External Affairs
Iris Maria Chavez
OAFP Government Affairs