

CHC, OHSU to bring more physicians to Central Oregon

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

In the last two years, 1,250 Oregon physicians left the workforce. Oregon's only medical school graduated just 300 new physicians to replace them. In an effort to address this problem, Cascade Healthcare Community will soon begin working with Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU) to increase the number of medical students the medical school can graduate each year. "Clearly we're facing a pretty serious physician shortage both in Oregon and around the nation," explained Jim Diegel, president and CEO of Cascade Healthcare Community (CHC). "We're eager to be a part of the solution." Currently, OHSU has facilities to accommodate only 120 medical students at a time. But with help from CHC and other Oregon hospitals, OHSU hopes to be able to ultimately graduate 200 students a year. The plan involves gradually increasing the number of medical students each year for the next several years. Through a combination of expanded facilities and study programs at other universities, the school will be able to handle the increased students in their early years. For third and fourth year students, CHC will help handle the extra load by creating more clinical clerkship opportunities at St. Charles Bend and St. Charles Redmond. "Hospitals like St. Charles will help us accommodate those 40 extra students we might not otherwise be able to place in Portland for clinical rotations," explained Vicki Fields, assistant dean for medical education at OHSU. "It will also allow those students to have exposure to smaller communities where they might eventually want to practice medicine." Though CHC already offers some training programs for medical students, the new partnership with OHSU will double the number of medical students training at the two hospitals at any given time. In the coming year, representatives of CHC and OHSU will work together to develop a timeline, discuss funding, and determine the types of medical rotations that will be offered.

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