

ROUGH DRAFT

PHYSICIAN SHORTAGE

- The fact that we face a physician shortage is not news.
- Oklahoma ranks 43rd nationally in physicians per capita and 49th in primary care physicians per capita.
- This problem is particularly pronounced in our rural areas.

RESIDENCIES

- One of the biggest issues facing Oklahoma is our lack of residency slots.
- We currently have more students in medical school than we have available residencies. Many of our best and brightest are going to be forced to leave the state through no fault of their own.
- Statistically, most physicians end up practicing in areas near where they did their residencies so, if our med students leave the state, odds are we won't get them back.
- So we applaud TSET for their grant to the OSU medical authority to launch new medical residency programs.

NO QUICK FIX

- This is exactly the kind of creative approach that we need to be utilizing.
- Our health care shortage didn't appear overnight, and we won't get out of it overnight. No one state agency or business can solve it.
- We need innovative approaches and partnerships between the state, our medical schools, state-run hospitals and private entities to help address this issue and take a look at long-term solutions.

TSET

- As we know, the TSET Board already has the legal authority to use its earnings to help address physician shortage issues.
- We applaud them for the work that they have already done and hope that they will continue to look for opportunities to fund these types of programs that will help provide health care services to underserved Oklahomans.

NO STEALING FROM CORPUS

- I must close with one word of caution. OSMA is a strong supporter of TSET's mission of promoting health in the state and the conservative approach voters took when the Trust was created, only allowing the TSET Board to spend money off of the earnings.
- We believe this approach should continue and allow TSET to operate for years to come. As such, our Board has voted to strongly oppose any effort—now matter how well-intentioned—that would reduce the corpus of the money in the Trust.

CONCLUSION

- TSET is not the silver bullet to solve our physician shortage issues.
- But we hope they will continue to be a part of a long-term approach to addressing this issue and our state's other health care needs.