

# Oklahoma Physician Recruitment and Retention Program

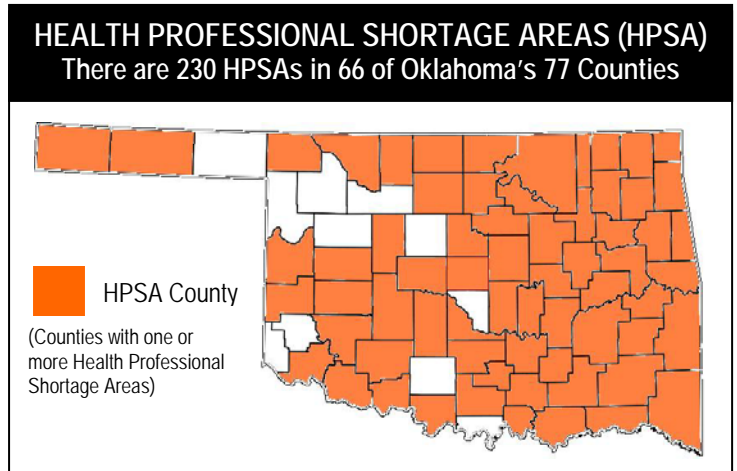
## *A Critical Shortage of Primary Care Doctors*

- There are 230 Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs) in 66 of Oklahoma's 77 counties that do not meet the national standard of one physician for every 3,500 people.
- According to the American Medical Association (AMA) data Oklahoma ranks last in the nation in the number of physicians to patient ratio.
- The number of U.S. medical graduates choosing to enter primary care residencies has fallen by almost 50 percent over the past 10 years.
- Oklahoma's 2010 Health Improvement Plan proposed by the State Board of Health listed training and recruitment of primary care physicians as one of the top 5 issues Oklahoma must address.
- By 2015, Oklahoma will need more than 2,000 additional primary care physicians to care for the state's underserved population.
- The average age of primary care physicians in Oklahoma is 54 years.
- Oklahoma is 49<sup>th</sup> in health outcomes by the United Health Foundation.

## *Oklahoma Needs Bold Action to Rebuild Its Primary Care Infrastructure*

Oklahoma's existing loan repayment programs through Physician Manpower Training Commission (PMTC) are disparate and underfunded. The repayment amounts have not changed since the programs' inception and fall far short of meeting the state's current needs.

By proper funding of the States' loan repayment programs and increasing graduate medical education offerings Oklahoma can greatly increase primary care access in those areas with the most need.



Chief among the multiple factors contributing to Oklahoma's shrinking supply of primary care physicians is the cost of medical school. Faced with such high medical school debt, many doctors forego practice in rural and underserved areas and instead choose more lucrative specialties in urban communities.

## *Invest in Oklahoma's Health Care Workforce Infrastructure*

- This program mirrors legislation passed by the Texas Legislature two years ago increasing their loan repayment program to \$160,000 over four years. - Texas is now recruiting physicians from Oklahoma with their new medical student loan repayment package.
- EXAMPLE – The difference for a primary care physician looking to open a practice in Madill, OK or Gainesville, TX...in Gainesville their student loans will be repaid in 4 years by the new Texas scholarship program.... in Madill it could take up to 20 years to repay their medical school loans with personal income and the current PMTC program which offers stipends up to a maximum of \$40,000 (when available).
- This program will remove one of the most significant barriers to physicians choosing to practice primary care and strengthen the state's primary care infrastructure.
- This program will help reduce unnecessary hospitalizations and costly trips to the emergency room.

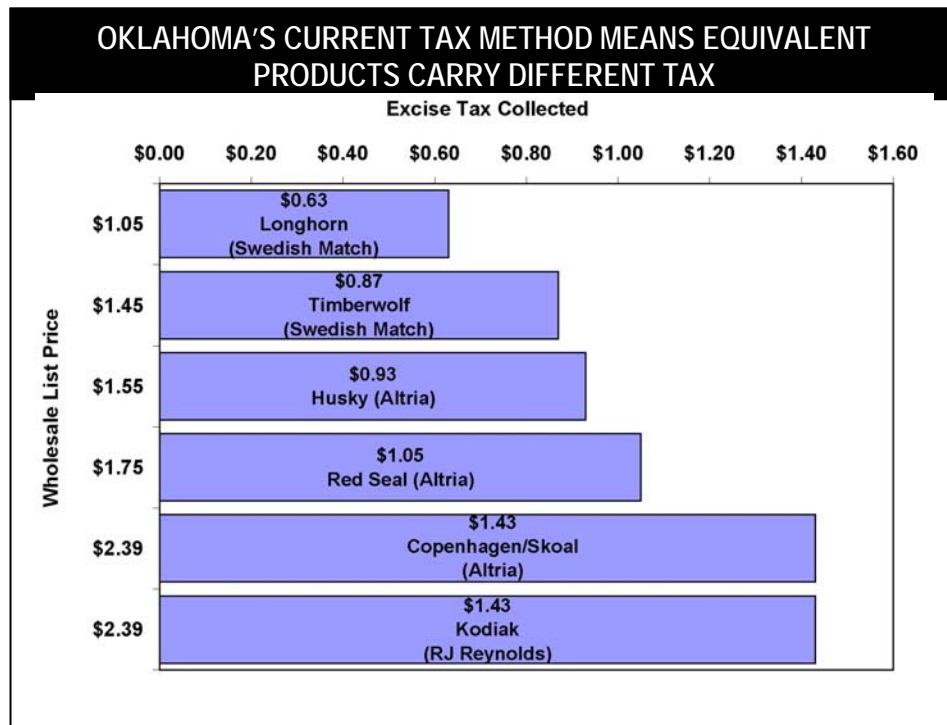
# Restructuring the Smokeless Tobacco Tax

## How Smokeless Tobacco is Currently Taxed in Oklahoma

- While most excise taxes are applied equally on a per-unit basis, the excise tax on smokeless tobacco is calculated at 60 percent of the wholesale list price (ad valorem vs. per unit tax).
- The current method Oklahoma uses to tax smokeless tobacco products allows less expensive brands to avoid paying their share of the harm they cause and deprives the state of excise tax revenue.

## Closing Oklahoma's Tobacco Tax Loophole

- The Oklahoma Legislature could restructure the way Oklahoma taxes tobacco by imposing a \$1.20 per ounce tax on all moist smokeless tobacco.
- This would result in a \$1.44 per can tax being applied equally and consistently to all smokeless tobacco products; generating more than \$7-million dollars in tax revenue.



## What others are saying about the Tobacco Tax Loophole

- **American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC)** calls this a "Fair Deal for Smokeless Tobacco". ALEC fully supports efforts to change or convert state excise taxes levied on moist smokeless tobacco from ad valorem or price based to a weight or volume based.
- **Supporters include:** Ada Area Chamber of Commerce; Altus Chamber of Commerce; Ardmore Chamber of Commerce; Ardmore Development Authority; Blue Cross Blue Shield of Oklahoma; Greater Enid Chamber of Commerce; Greater Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce; Lawton Ft. Sill Chamber of Commerce; LeFlore County Development Coalition; Oklahoma Academy of Family Physicians; Oklahoma Academy of Pediatrics; Oklahoma Chapter of the American College of Physicians; Oklahoma Hospital Association; Oklahoma Municipal League; Oklahoma Osteopathic Association; Oklahoma Primary Care Association; Oklahoma State Chamber of Commerce; Oklahoma State Medical Association; OSU Center for Rural Health; Pawhuska Chamber of Commerce; Poteau Chamber of Commerce; and the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center.