

WHY FUND THE EXPANSION OF OKLAHOMA HEALTH CARE EDUCATION (SB 310)?

- **The health care industry is a major economic engine in Oklahoma**
 - Health care is the second largest employing industry, providing 14% of Oklahoma's total employment.
 - Health care contributes more than \$6.5 billion in direct contributions to Oklahoma's Gross State product.
 - According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, health care professions are among the fastest growing occupations and have the best prospects for job growth.
 - In many Oklahoma communities, health care is the number one or two employer of individuals and is critical to the economic health and growth of those communities.

- **Oklahomans are in desperate need of access to health care professionals to improve their poor health status**
 - There are 20.7% of adults and 11.6% of children in Oklahoma who are uninsured; 56% of Hispanics living in Oklahoma do not have health insurance.
 - More than 541,000 Oklahoma adults report their health is fair or poor.
 - Compared to other states, Oklahoma is among the worst states when it comes to death from: Heart disease (49th), Stroke (47th), Diabetes (44th), Child mortality (43rd), Lung cancer (40th), Obesity (38th) and Infant mortality (37th).

- **Despite more than \$30 million invested by Oklahoma hospitals to expand educational capacity, the demand of health professionals in Oklahoma is outpacing supply**
 - By 2012, Oklahoma will have a shortage of more than 3,000 nurses, 600 lab technicians, 400 physical therapists, 300 surgical technologists and nearly 200 occupational therapists.
 - Oklahoma ranks last in the nation for access to primary care physicians.
 - In 2007, the following counties had only one physician (D.O. or M.D.) providing primary care services: Alfalfa, Beaver, Boise City, Cimarron, Coal, Grant, Harper, Johnson and Kiowa. In 2007, Pushmataha county had no primary care physician practicing in that county.
 - Oklahoma ranks 44th in the nation for the number of registered nurses (RNs) per 100,000 population.
 - Oklahoma pays less than neighboring states for a number of allied health professions.
 - The Oklahoma Employment Security Commission projects a 24% growth rate for many allied health care occupations between 2004-2012.

- **Institutions educating health professionals need resources to expand capacity**
 - Within Oklahoma public colleges and universities a bottleneck has developed in nursing and allied health with only 63% of qualified applicants being admitted into public colleges and universities.
 - Lack of adequate numbers of faculty in Oklahoma's post-secondary and allied health programs is the biggest obstacle to expanding educational capacity.
 - Low faculty salaries compared to salaries paid in patient care settings continue to be a recruitment and retention challenge for educational settings seeking RN educators.