

Good morning/afternoon:

My name is James Kuemmerle. I have been a clinical social worker for nearly 28 years. I have had the opportunity to work in rural and frontier communities in Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Wyoming, and Colorado. Currently, I am employed as a clinical director for an agency that serves individuals and families in northeast Colorado. Presently, my family and I reside in the town of Akron, CO.

I am submitting my written testimony because I am not available to do so in person at today's committee hearing. I can certainly speak of the staffing challenges for behavioral health professionals in rural and frontier communities. HB22-1005 could be one potential opportunity to assist with developing new behavioral health professionals to serve our communities. What often happens currently is that behavioral health graduate students who already reside in our communities due to the ability to take graduate school coursework via online programs find difficulty in finding existing, qualified staff to supervise and instruct them in internship settings because of the lack of paid professional clinicians and the extra time associated with providing this supervision and training oversight. This bill has the potential to help with our shortage of available supervisory clinicians by helping to financially support and further recruit more supervising clinicians in our rural communities here in Colorado.

There are many other issues that we face with the recruitment and retention of staff but that is a conversation for another time.

I have worked with graduate students throughout my career and it is one of the best opportunities to recruit staff. I remain optimistic that I will be able to recruit and retain staff so I can once again, supervise, mentor, and instruct graduate students. I would do this regardless of HB22-1005, but it would be greatly appreciated to receive the proposed tax credit and it might help me recruit additional supervising clinicians moving forward.

Should anyone have questions or want to discuss this in greater detail, I can be reached at 412-612-0497 (cell) or [jkuemmerle264@gmail.com](mailto:jkuemmerle264@gmail.com) (personal email). I hope to have the opportunity in the future to be able to testify in support of this effort in person.

1-25-22

House Health And Insurance Committee  
Colorado House of Representatives

Re: Rural Preceptor Tax Credit

To the Committee:

As a Family Physician in rural central Colorado, I am happy to provide written testimony in favor of continuing the Rural Preceptor Tax Credit, House Bill 1005.

I have practiced in Salida for 25 years and have endeavored to maintain robust mentorship for medical students similar to that which I received while in training. Exposure to excellent physician mentors solidified my commitment to rural primary care and I have seen similar results with students I have taught.

Of note, in our private practice we just hired a new residency graduate who trained with us as a student. We have another former student currently completing a fellowship in another state who wants to return here, or another rural site in Colorado. Students routinely cite their experience here as transformative since they get to participate first hand in full-spectrum practice and simultaneously enjoy the best of Colorado outdoors.

Rural physicians are expected to wear many volunteer hats and teaching students, although enriching, is yet another such volunteer responsibility. That said, it is clear from my experience that the preceptor program is effective at getting students interested in rural and underserved areas. Therefore, the tax credit seems to serve a dual purpose of providing some recompense to busy health care providers while increasing the future workforce pool in our rural communities.

I strongly encourage the Committee to continue and expand the Rural Preceptor Tax Credit.

Thank you for your consideration of this letter.

Yours,

Matthew Burkley, MD  
*Family Physician in Salida*  
*Member of the Colorado Academy of Family Physicians*