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It has long been understood that sexual misconduct is underreported, overlooked, and occurs at alarming rates in medicine. Women, particularly women of color, experience harassment and assault at higher rates than their white male counterparts.

Only when we create a just and safe culture for everyone in medicine, admit our shortcomings and correct past mistakes will we ever have a chance to move forward as a profession and as a community of healthcare workers which treats all humans with respect and insists on keeping each one safe. In order to do this, we must create safe reporting avenues that protect those who experience sexual misconduct from retaliation while ensuring that perpetrators are held accountable. We must also begin to shine the light of truth on the reality of the climate that encourages, excuses and shelters the perpetrators. To do this, we must teach all in the healthcare community from learners to senior members about the reality of these crimes and how to respond compassionately and constructively as bystanders, supervisors, colleagues and friends when such a crime is reported.

The Oregon Chapter American College of Physicians condemns sexual harassment and assault. We recognize the importance of laws like Title IX and the responsibility that we have to advocate for institutional policies and cultures that honor the letter and the spirit of those laws. We also join the American College of Physicians in calling for Congress to pass H.R. 1620, the Violence Against Women (VAWA) Reauthorization Act of 2021. Our Chapter renews its commitment to supporting policies that reduce sexual misconduct in medicine, increase reporting, and ensure a safe and inclusive profession.

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