

# 2023 Forum on Aging in Rural Oregon

## End-of-Life Doulas in Rural Oregon: Improved Support for Living with Advanced Illness

Elizabeth Johnson, MA and Erin Collins, MN RN CHPN  
The Peaceful Presence Project

Thank you to our partners:



# End-of-life Doulas in Rural Oregon: improved support for living with advanced illness

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The Peaceful Presence Project



peaceful presence

# Learning objectives

At the end of this presentation, participants will be able to:

1. Describe the role of the end-of-life doula.
2. Differentiate between medical and non-medical support needs at the end-of-life.
3. Recognize how community-embedded support improves end-of-life care for rural Oregonians.





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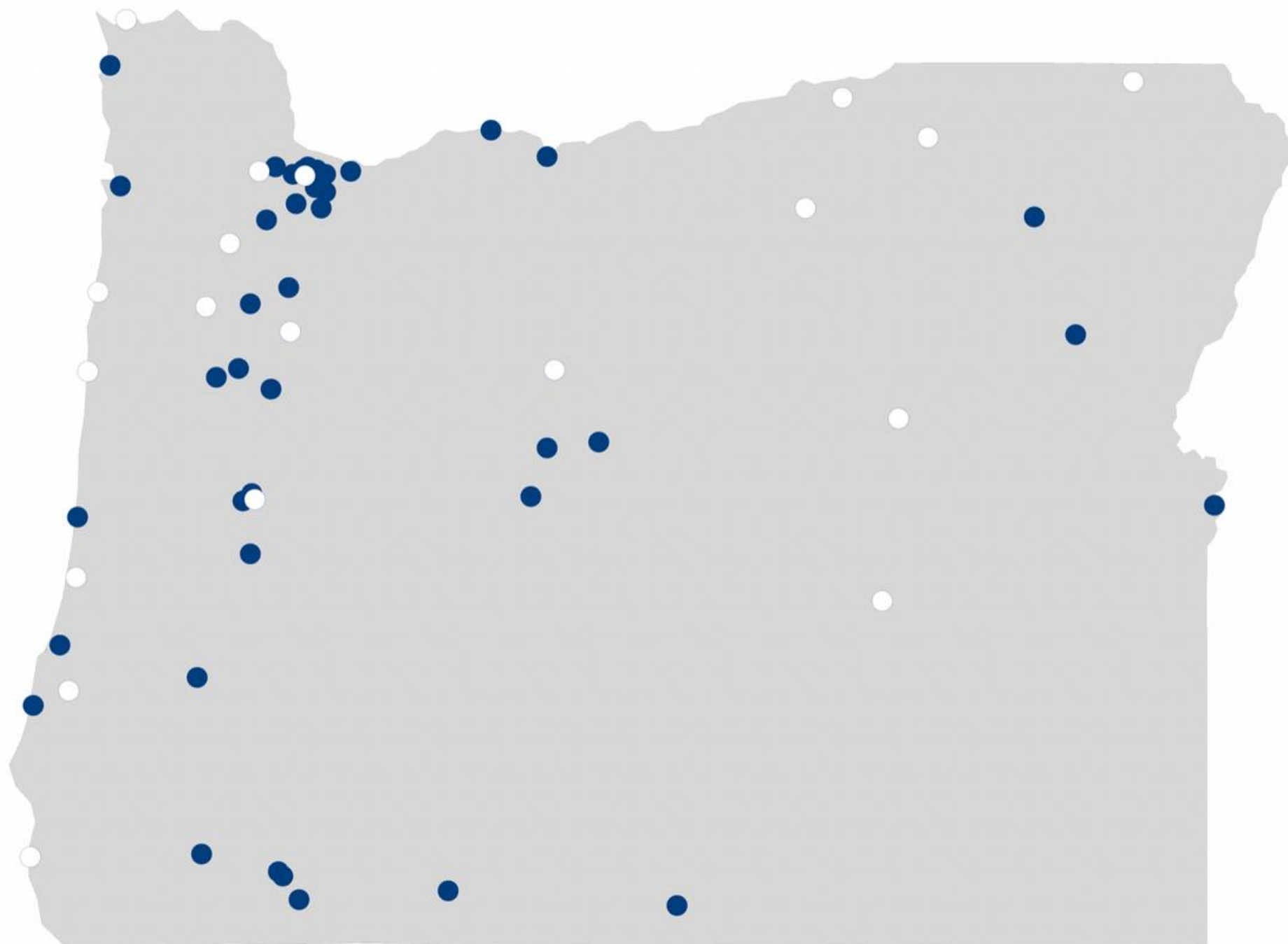
END OF LIFE DOULAS

We reimagine and transform the way communities talk about,  
plan for and experience the last stage of life.

*Vision: A culture in which every community member receives  
compassionate, equitable support through the end of life.*

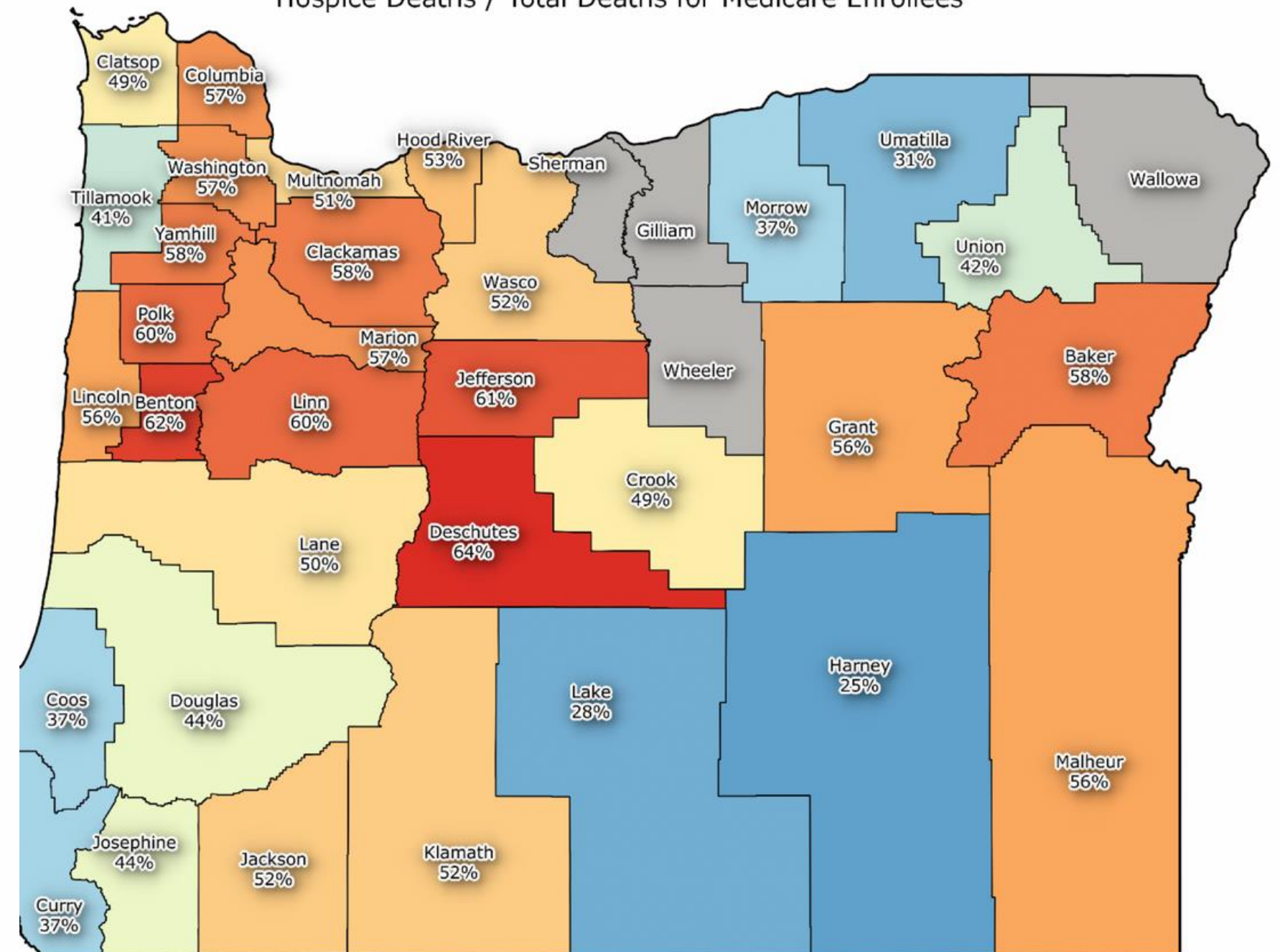
# End of Life Care in Oregon

Figure 2. Availability of Hospital Palliative Care in Oregon



## OREGON DEATH SERVICE RATIO FOR 2017

Hospice Deaths / Total Deaths for Medicare Enrollees



# What is Palliative Care?

Palliative care:

- Helps people with serious illness stay at home rather than having to go to the ER or the hospital.
- Reduces physical discomfort, improves quality of life, and makes living with a serious illness easier.
- Both for the person and those who help care for them.

Hospice provides this same whole-person care after someone chooses to forego further treatment for their illness.



# Domains of Palliative Care



# Compassionate Communities Model of Care

Compassionate Communities widen the circle of caring and provide much-needed support to patients and caregivers facing serious illness and death.

- Conversations around death, dying, and bereavement normalized and productive.
- Palliative care repositioned to support community-based health and social care for people at the end of life and their families.
- Strong networks of care and resiliency

# 95% RULE

Only 5% of a dying person's time is spent face to face with a medical professional

- What are we as a community doing with the other 95% of the time?
- What quality of support are people receiving, and from whom?
- Is it sufficient?



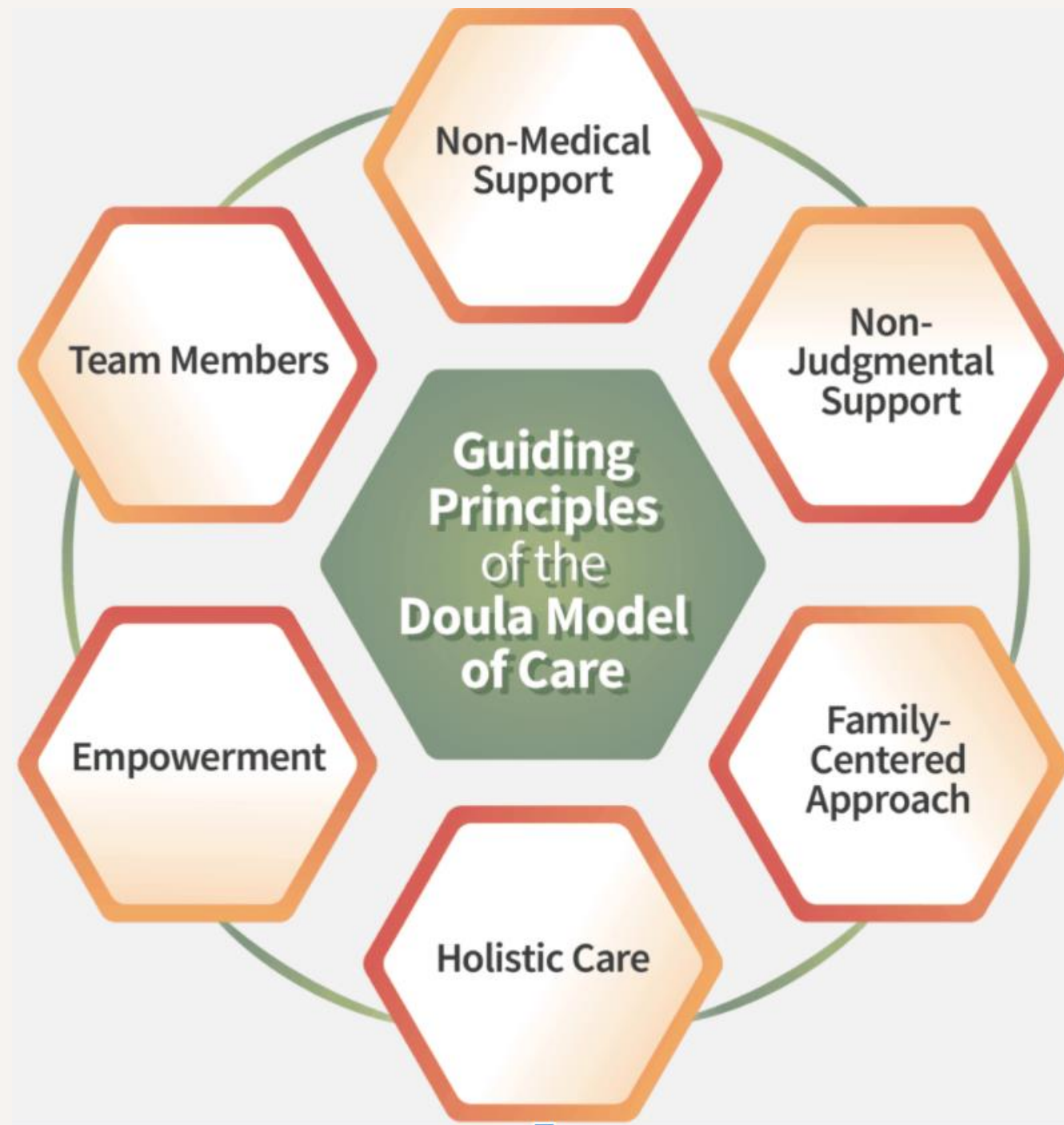
“My Grandmother was born and raised in Wallowa County; when she needed hospice, the visiting nurse service was the only thing available– and that was only during regular business hours.

So to receive good end of life care, we had to move her away to Union County where she could reside in an assisted living facility and receive hospice. That’s 35 miles away.

For other seniors who don’t have family nearby, I really think doulas can offer the needed support”



# End of Life Doulas

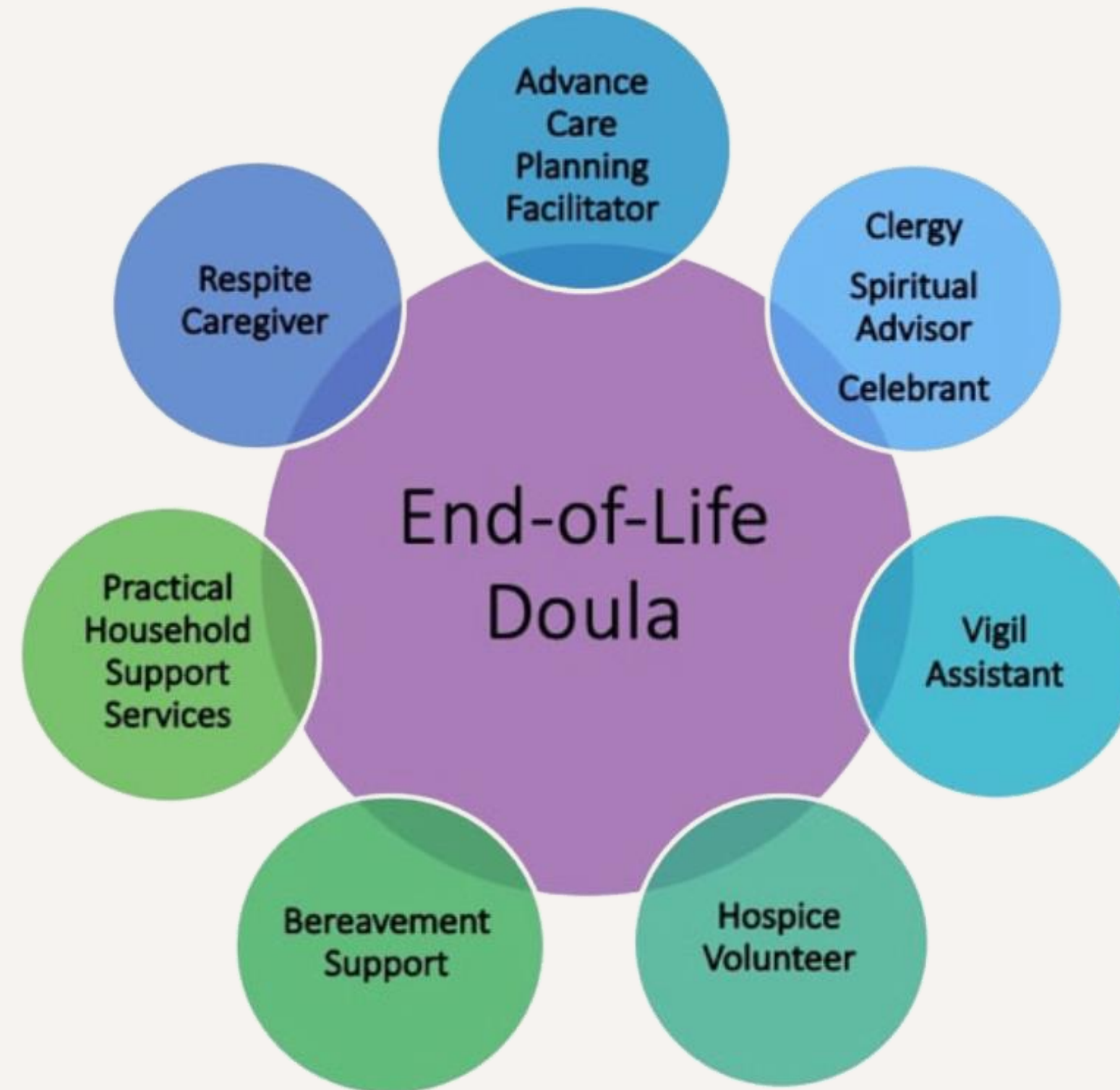


- End-of-Life Doulas [EOLDs] are non-medical companions to the dying and their families.
- EOLDs complement other services that a dying person and their family may be receiving, including hospice and/or palliative care.
- EOLDs provide a wide range of holistic life support services to address:

Physical  
Emotional  
Spiritual  
Practical

# Doula Model of Care

Helping to fill unmet needs



# Oregon-Based Rural End of Life Doula Training

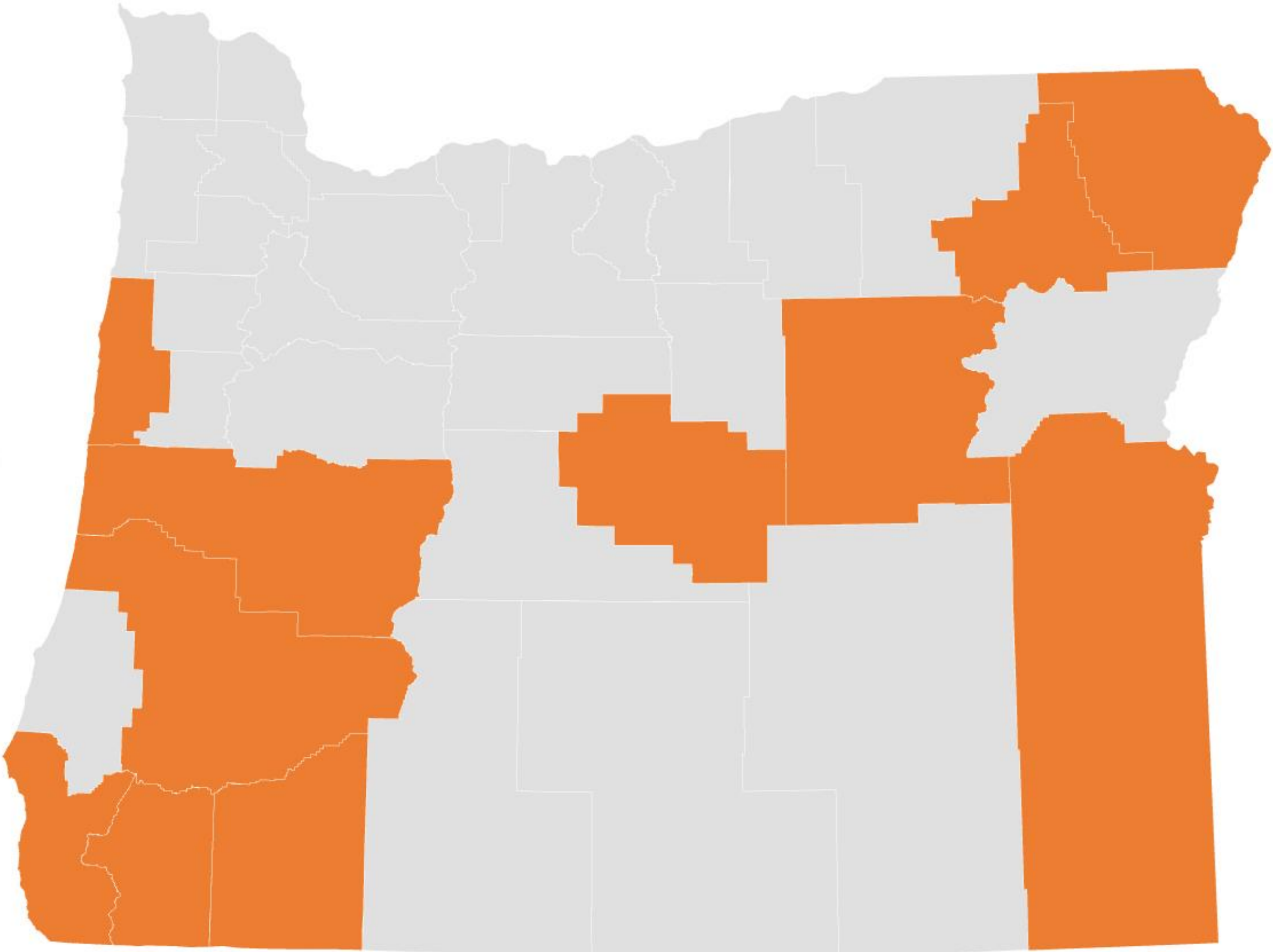
## Process:

- Conducted basic needs assessment
- Secured Funding: Braemar Charitable Trust
  - 12 students
  - 8 weeks of online learning
  - 5 hr in-person immersive workshop
- Recruitment via rural networks
- 75 applicants from across rural Oregon



Rural EOLD Participant Counties of Residence

Oregon



Wallowa  
Grant  
Union  
Malheur  
Crook  
Douglas  
Lane  
Lincoln  
Jackson  
Josephine  
Curry

# Training Details

- 8 week training: March 1 to April 26
- 6 to 10 hours of independent learning per week
- Four, 1.5 hr zoom calls & final in-person workshop in Bend, Oregon

## Primary areas of focus:

- Training to End of Life Doula model of care
- Networking between trainees across Oregon
- Cultivating plan for providing support in home communities



# Training Curriculum

- Foundations: Relationship with Self, Others and Systems
- Doula Model of Care:  
Communication, ethics, knowledge set and professionalism
- Doula Skill Set:
  - Grief
  - Family dynamics
  - Legacy and life-review
  - Other supportive interventions
- Inclusive care & cultural humility
- Self stewardship and professional boundaries
- Planning for Care Advance care planning and end of life planning
- Community: Resources, networking and establishing a practice

Getting to know each other  
in person:

“we come from so many differences-  
geographic locations, different ages and  
experiences— yet our humanity has been  
confirmed— we came together under our  
shared commonality”

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# Experiential learning:

“This taught me how to be able to connect on shared experiences, rather than on prescriptions or solutions”

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Rural Oregon End of Life Doula Cohort 2023

# **Project Goals**

**Widening the circle of caring  
for patients and caregivers**

**Identifying roles and individuals who can  
embed skillset in existing professions or capacities**

**Expanding cohesive presence of informed community members  
who can support, especially in resource-limited settings**

**Ultimate Goal:  
A more death literate Oregon**



## Rural Oregon County Mapping

Home

Statewide Resources

Glossary of Terms

Crook County

Douglas County

Harney County

Jefferson County

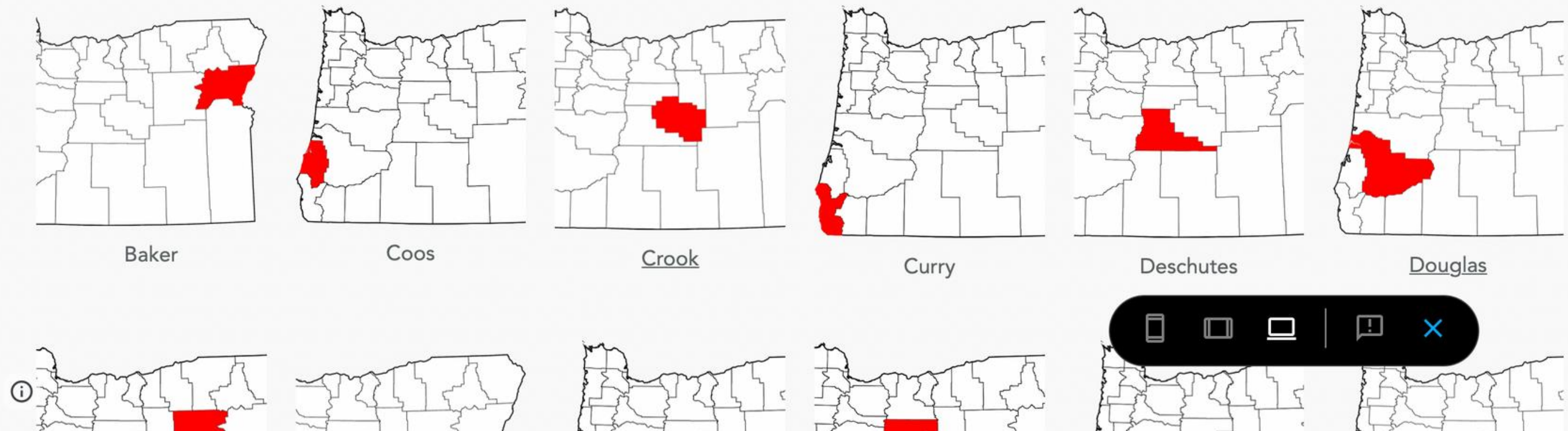
Lane County

Wheeler County

## End-of-Life (EOL) Friendly Criteria for Communities:

1. Community supports educational events about the end-of-life
2. Multiple care options are available for aging and dying patients
3. Hospitals offer palliative care to patients
4. Funeral and burial options are available within the community
5. Majority of adults have been given the opportunity to have an Advance Care Planning conversation
6. Local clinicians have been trained to have end-of-life conversations with their patients

## Rural Oregon EOL Mapping

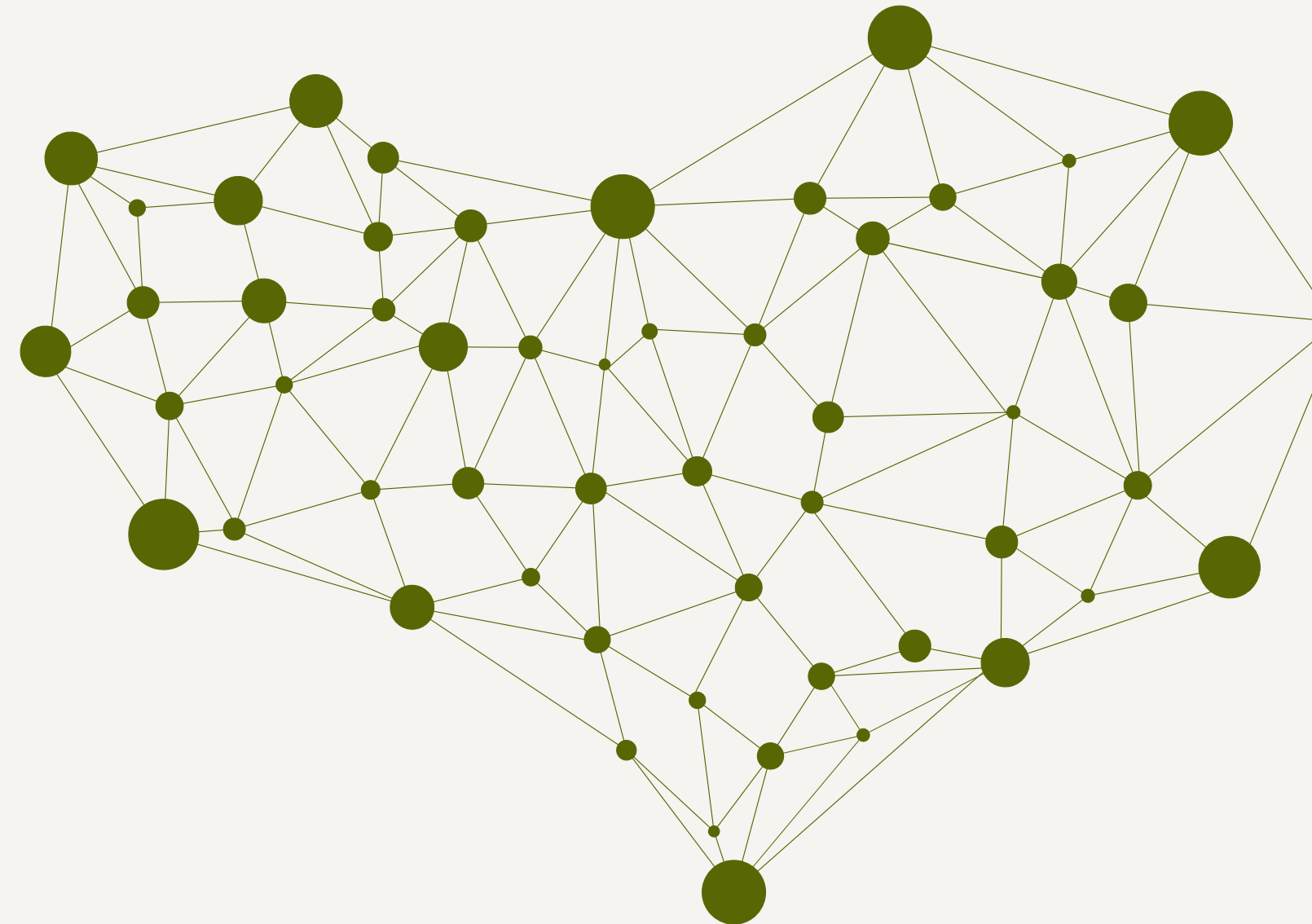


# Statewide Network for Serious Illness Care

- Peer to peer networks established in each county
- Ongoing mentorship and support to encourage best practices
- Referrals and directory for EOL care practitioners

Education and training opportunities for:

- Community Health Workers
- Community-based volunteers (OABHI model)
- Professional end of life doulas



# CHW Education Opportunities

Palliative Care Continuing Education  
Fall 2023  
Oregon State University

12 CEUs  
4 weeks/ 3 hours per week

- Comprehensive understanding of serious illness care
- 8 Domains of Palliative Care
- Practical support and communication skills
- Advance Care Planning
- Community Stewardship

contact: [erin@thepeacefulpresenceproject.org](mailto:erin@thepeacefulpresenceproject.org) to be notified about enrollment opening

Scholarships available



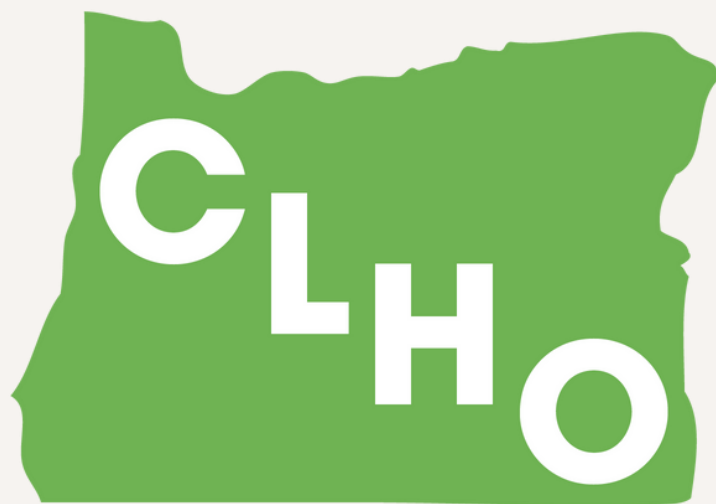
# CHW Education Opportunities

End of Life Doula Training for Rural CHWs

September-November 2023

8 weeks, 6-10 hrs per week

- Relationship with Self, Others and Systems of End of Life Care
- Companionship Skills: active listening, emotional support, vigil support
- Family dynamics, Grief and Loss
- Ritual, Ceremony and Celebration
- Advance Care Planning, End of Life Planning
- Self-sustainability
- Community Outreach and business development



Coalition of Local Health Officials

contact: [janessa@oregonclho.org](mailto:janessa@oregonclho.org) to enroll  
Tuition is subsidized by Healthy Rural Oregon Program

# EOL Doula referrals

<http://thepeacefulpresenceproject.org/contact>



CLICK HERE FOR PROVIDER REFERRAL FOR SERVICES

CLICK HERE TO SUBSCRIBE TO OUR NEWSLETTER

# We invite you to collaborate

***Let's make Oregon a model  
Compassionate Communities State***



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## Get in touch with us

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- [www.thepeacefulpresenceproject.org](http://www.thepeacefulpresenceproject.org)
- [info@thepeacefulpresenceproject.org](mailto:info@thepeacefulpresenceproject.org)
- 541-647-8636

# 2023 Forum on Aging in Rural Oregon

## Thank you!



**Columbia Pacific CCO**™  
Part of the CareOregon Family



*Building healthier communities together*



At the University of Oregon