



Lincoln County Health & Human Services Public Health



3/26/19

Co-Chairs Senator Lee Beyer, Representative Nosse, and members of the Committee:

Good day, my name is Nicole Fields and I am the Deputy Director of Public Health for Lincoln County Health and Human Services. I am here today supporting additional investments in public health to ensure our local public health authorities have the capacity to address the rising number of reportable diseases and environmental health threats, and that we continue to prevent the leading causes of death and disease in Oregon.

Lincoln County is home to approximately 48,000 residents as of 2017. Approximately 37 percent of the county's residents live in rural areas. Rural geography often isolates families through their limited daily interactions with other residents. Isolation is increased by limited public transportation options as well as the variable cost of gasoline. Approximately 20 percent of Lincoln County's population lives below the federal poverty line, compared to 13 percent of Oregon's total population. One worrisome statistic is that children less than five years of age are among the age groups with the highest percentage living below the federal poverty level, accounting for about one-third of children under five years of age in Lincoln County.

Public health modernization means everyone in Oregon can expect basic public protections critical to their health and the health of future generations; these include clean air, safe food and water, health promotion and prevention of disease and responding to new health threats. Communicable disease and environmental health programs serve to protect the safety and health of our communities. Recent examples of public health modernization work conducted in Lincoln County include:

- An uptake in starting the HPV vaccine series in the 4 School Based Health Centers in Lincoln County, which is shown to prevent cancer of the cervix, anus, vulva/vagina, penis, or throat.
- An overall increase in the number of adolescents in the 4 School Based Health Centers in Lincoln County who have completed the HPV series.
- An increase in the number of children under the age of 2 in the Lincoln Community Health Centers who are up to date on their TDap (Tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis (Whooping Cough)) vaccine.
- New community communication methods about vaccines.
- A partnership with Oregon State University to work as an Academic Health Department.

We currently rely on the State Support for Public Health funding \$105,711 to support our modernization efforts. Additional funding would allow our health department to expand programming based on data and past successes to further protect the health of Lincoln County residents.

Investing an additional \$47.7 million investment in public health modernization would provide the public health system funding to expand the current work to protect the public's health through the prevention of disease and infections, engaging the health system to improve immunization rates, and allow a focus on environmental health threats from things like drought, deteriorating air quality, wildfires, heat waves, and contaminated drinking water.

I would like to thank you for allowing me to share the important public health work we do in Lincoln County and I am happy to answer any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nicole Fields', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

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