



February 4, 2021

Oregon State Legislature
House Committee on Veterans and Emergency Management
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Re: House Bill 2461 – Creation of Oregon Critical Disaster Preparedness Stockpile

Chair Evans and members of the House on Veterans and Emergency Management:

On behalf of Oregon's 62 community hospitals and the patients they serve, the Oregon Association of Hospitals and Health Systems (OAHHS) supports the overall intent of HB 2461. OAHHS has been a consistent voice that emergency preparedness and resiliency planning are of the utmost importance. In addition, it is essential that the state conduct an after-action review of both the COVID-19 public health emergency and the historic wildfires of 2020 to inform the process and outcomes set forth in this bill.

Large-scale emergency response is only as effective as the coordination behind that response. While individuals or organizations can prepare themselves for an emergency, as we learned in 2020, most can only do so realistically to a certain extent, and it is insufficient given the interconnected nature of our communities. The creation of the Oregon Critical Disaster Preparedness Stockpile will be a significant step toward Oregon's resiliency and preparedness, and a step that can only be achieved by the level of large-scale coordination that Oregon Homeland Security Council and other agencies can provide.

The bill as drafted raises concerns of unintended consequences that could come from the lack of input and participation on the bill from stakeholders at the beginning of the early discussions. While strongly encourage that external stakeholders, including hospitals and health care providers, be consulted to provide meaningful input into the development and ongoing maintenance of the Oregon Critical Disaster Preparedness Stockpile, the subpoena authority granted to the Oregon Homeland Security Council seems unduly punitive when the focus should be on collaboration and coordination.

OAHHS strongly supports strategic resiliency planning and emergency preparedness for individuals, communities, and organizations across Oregon; OAHHS supports the intent of HB 2461 as it will serve as a vital step to achieve that.

Thank you,

Andi Easton
Vice President of Government Affairs
Oregon Association of Hospitals and Health Systems