



February 9, 2021
Joint Subcommittee on Human Services
Testimony Supporting Public Health Modernization Funding, HB 5024

Co-Chairs Senator Lieber and Representative Nosse and Members of the Committee:
(I'd like to thank the committee for the opportunity to testify today)

My name is Keith Winsor and I'm the Chairman of the Deschutes County Public Health Advisory Board. I'm here today in support of Public Health Modernization funding, HB 5024, for additional investments in public health for state and local governments.

The goals of Public Health Modernization include ensuring that you, your family and future generations of Oregonians, can have a public health system that protects communities and prevents the spread of disease.

This past year has brought a monumental challenge to our nation that makes Public Health Modernization funding more critical than ever. We're now in the midst of what's being called a "once in a century pandemic"—Covid-19.

But Covid is unlikely to be a once in a century event. In just the past twenty years the world has witnessed, the West Nile Virus, SARS, H1N1, MERS, Ebola and Zika. It is inevitable that with worldwide population growth, climate change, animal/human clustering, along with other exacerbating multipliers, we are going to experience more and more diseases of great magnitude. Communicable diseases look to be a primary issue of the future and public health is the leading institution to keep the public safe in combating this problem.

Because of Covid, public health is experiencing a renaissance from unheralded government organization to front line defender against a deadly disease that continues to ravage the world. If there is one thing that we can all agree on, we as a nation were not prepared for this attack. It takes investment in resources, employees and science to overcome this pandemic and to lay the groundwork for the inevitable future invasions that will come our way.

In conclusion, I urge you to support HB 5024 for an additional \$69 million in funding for public health in order to provide all Oregonians with the preventive services and public health protections they need to meet the great challenges of today as well as those in our future.

Thank you.