

HB 2773 -2 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

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Sub-Referral To: Joint Committee On Ways and Means

Meeting Dates: 2/1, 3/14

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Requires Oregon Health Authority (OHA) to provide incentives to increase recruitment and retention of local public health professionals. Requires OHA to expand and develop incentive programs to increase access to services for rural and underserved communities. Requires OHA to develop a program to award local public health professional student loan forgiveness or student loan repayment assistance. Appropriates \$40 million to OHA for local public health incentives. Requires OHA to establish a program to provide grants to local public health agencies that provide opportunities to receive training in nursing duties performed in a local public health agency. Takes effect on 91st day following adjournment sine die.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Public health workforce shortages and impacts
- Benefits of investments in public health
- Importance of diversifying public health workforce
- Barriers to hiring public health professionals

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

-2 **Replaces measure.** Creates subaccount in Health Care Provider Incentive Fund instead of standalone fund. Removes private donations as option for funding. Clarifies public health workers eligibility for incentives. Removes race/ethnicity and geographic priorities for incentive recipients. Removes tax subsidies as incentive type. Clarifies provisions of grant program for local public health authorities that provide training opportunities for students, including clarifying that grants do not constitute "compensation" for pay equity purposes. Requires OHA to study administration and effectiveness of incentive and grant programs and report to Legislative Assembly by November 1, 2026 and November 1, 2028. Requires OHA to provide notice to all local public health authorities and Legislative Assembly if subaccount funds are expected to be exhausted before July 1, 2029.

FISCAL: Fiscal impact issued

REVENUE: No revenue impact

BACKGROUND:

Oregon's public health system includes federal, state, and local government partners, along with private organizations that work together to identify, plan for, and prevent communicable and environmental threats. In 2015, the Legislative Assembly passed House Bill 3100 modernizing the state's public health system and giving more control to local public health authorities. While the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the need for a robust public health workforce, it simultaneously took a toll on the existing workforce as with other sectors of the state's health care system. In its 2021 Local Public Health Workforce Report, the Coalition of Local Health Officials (CHLO) made recommendations for how to improve recruitment and retention of local public health professionals, including addressing challenges in pay and educational opportunities.

House Bill 2773 would require the Oregon Health Authority to provide incentives to increase recruitment and retention of local public health professionals.