



February 1, 2023

Clackamas County Board of Commissioners
Policy Position
Relating to local public health workforce opportunities

Clackamas County supports HB 2773: Oregon’s local public health authorities rely on a thriving workforce that reflects the diversity of our communities to effectively provide essential services, reduce health inequities, and respond quickly to a public health emergency. Building a well-funded and supported workforce is a priority for Clackamas County Public Health (CCPH), and we support additional investments that advance this effort statewide.

The ongoing response to COVID-19 clearly demonstrates the need for a robust public health system. We have seen how vital a well-supported public health workforce is to promoting public health and keeping our families and communities safe. However, CCPH continues to struggle to hire specialized positions such as registered nurses, environmental health specialists, and health impact assessment researchers.

Positions that require licensed and experienced nursing/clinical staff may take up to a year or more to fill. These critical positions all too often are left unfilled given the shortage of available applicants and the difficulties with licensing requirements. In Clackamas County, these challenges most affect programs that are central to our role as the local public health authority, including Communicable Disease and Maternal Child Health.

As we emerge from the immediate crisis of the pandemic, we must rethink our approach to public health and recommit to investing in the strategies that advance health equity. Creating a more robust public health workforce pipeline requires coordination among the entire public health system, including local, state, and tribal public health agencies, along with community-based organizations, health systems, and academic partners.

CCPH is committed to continued collaboration with state and local partners, and the county urges the state legislature to increase resources that support a strong public health workforce, including additional recruitment and retention incentives available to local public health authorities.

We urge a “yes” vote on HB 2773.

Please contact Chris Lyons at clyons@clackamas.us for more information.