

March 23, 2023

Dear Senate Committee on Health Care:

RE: Testimony for Senate Bill 5525

Dear Co-Chairs Campos and Valderrama and members of the committee.

My name is Veronica Irvin and I am an Associate Professor of Public Health at Oregon State University but I am here today testifying from my role as the Chair of the Oregon Public Health Advisory Board.

I am here today to share information about the Oregon Health Authority, OHA, budget policy package for a \$50 million investment in public health modernization (POP 406).

The Public Health Advisory Board -- or PHAB -- is a 17-member, Governor-appointed board with a direct relationship to the Oregon Health Policy Board. Members include local public health administrators, a local health officer, health systems representatives, a representative of Oregon's federally-recognized Tribes, academic and public health experts and OHA leadership, among others. The Board is geographically diverse, with members based across the state.

Under Oregon law in Chapter 431, the Public Health Advisory Board has substantial responsibility to provide leadership and guidance for public health matters across the state and statutory roles related to modernizing Oregon's public health system. Some of its responsibilities include making recommendations to OHA for implementing public health modernization; establishing, updating and monitoring public health accountability metrics; and developing a public health modernization funding formula for local public health authorities that equitably distributes funds based on the health and demographics of each jurisdiction.

In early 2022, the Board began its biennial process to provide guidance to OHA for public health modernization priorities for the next biennium. OHA used this guidance to work closely with local and tribal public health leaders and community leaders to develop detailed strategies and resources needed to achieve the vision set by the Board.

In November 2022, The Public Health Advisory Board asked OHA to convene a workgroup of Board members, local public health officials and leaders from community-based organizations to continue to plan for new investments in public health modernization. Over the course of two months, this workgroup developed funding priorities and detailed descriptions of the core work of local public health authorities, OHA and community-based organizations that was necessary to achieve the priorities. Through a parallel process, OHA worked individually with each federally recognized Tribe to identify tribal public health priorities and core work. These priorities were reflected in the OHA budget presentation to this committee on March 20th.

Public health system priorities under this funding include:

- Building on lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic to respond to and mitigate emerging public health threats,
- Investing in initiatives to eliminate health inequities that are directed upstream and address inequities in communities of color and in rural communities,
- Investing in public health workforce development and retention, and
- Broadly implementing public health modernization across the public health system.

This collaborative process brought together leaders from across the governmental public health system with community partners to ensure that Oregon’s public health system is prepared for the work ahead. Additional investments will allow Oregon’s public health system to implement the critical work to achieve public health priorities for workforce, equity, communicable disease prevention and equity-centered responses to public health threats.

As the chair of the Public Health Advisory Board, I will look forward to continuing to support the Board, local and tribal public health authorities, community partners and OHA in moving forward on public health priorities in the upcoming biennium.

Thank you for your time and I am happy to answer any questions.

Sincerely,

Veronica L Irvin

Veronica L. Irvin, PhD, MPH

Chair, Oregon Public Health Advisory Board

Corvallis, OR 97330

Veronica.irvin@oregonstate.edu

(541) 737-1074