

Memo To: Joint Ways and Means Committee Members

Testimony: Brief Oral and
Submitted Written Testimony

Date: April 14, 2023

Greetings Co-Chair Steiner and Co-Vice Chair Smith, members of the joint committee,

I will keep my oral comments brief. I am also submitting detailed written testimony. I urge you pass the full budget request for ongoing Public Health Modernization (PHM). This investment offers a flexible source of funding allowing local public health authorities and their partners to provide needed public health services. Since the start of Public Health Modernization , local public health authorities have been able to build their capabilities around assessment and epidemiology, data analysis, and communication to the public as well as equity and cultural responsiveness. Anytime legislators consider issues around public health you must remember the fantastic job public health performed during the recent pandemic. Oregon ranked second lowest of the continental states in the rate of Covid-19 infections and eighth lowest in death rate. Only by fully funding the requested amount for Public Health Modernization can local public health departments continue to serve and fully protect Oregonians.

Thank You

Written Testimony

Here are recent activities of Lincoln County Public Health (LCPH) that can only continue with a fully funded modernization program. LCPH has been able to hire an epidemiologist and data analyst, an equity

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coordinator, a communications specialist, and others working on strengthening and sustaining community partnerships. These staff members offer a set of skills and capabilities that are foundational to being able to run and implement meaningful public health programs. PHM allows public health authorities to build on the COVID pandemic response and lessons learned and ensures the systems will be stronger and better able to handle the next public health crisis.

One example is as follows. LCPH was able to actively set up a response team focusing on Mpox (monkey pox), monitoring state data, reaching out to and engaging with community partners and members from the LGBTQ+ community. LCPH developed specific communication messages and materials to distribute to the public and more specifically to communities at higher risk of contract Mpox. This is an example of how epidemiology, cultural responsiveness and equity combine to support a holistic approach to address local public health problems.

LCPH is working on developing local dashboards for the community to access health information. It is working on a regional health assessment and an improvement plan alongside various community partners. It helped draft a county ordinance declaring racism a public health emergency. The department is developing, updating and training its workforce on emergency preparedness and response. All this work, and much more, is possible because of the public health modernization investment the Oregon legislature has made in the past.

I urge you to FULLY FUND PUBLIC HEALTH MODERNIZATION going forward. Thank You.

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