



February 5, 2024

Re: HB 4003 - Support

Chair Nosse and members of the House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care:

During the 2023 Legislative Session, the Oregon State Police unexpectedly announced a return of some functions to counties which had been previously provided by the state, namely Medical Examiner services, without additional resources allocated.

While the Oregon State Police is currently convening a Medical Examiner Workgroup with some stakeholders across the state to discuss Oregon's ME system to propose potential changes to the system, a number of public health departments have voiced concerns regarding the workgroup's structure, purpose, and lack of public engagement. As such, CLHO supports supplementing this existing workgroup with additional scaffolding – legislative staff and facilitation support for example – which would ensure additional stakeholder engagement and that the work leads to solutions.

The Oregon Coalition of Local Health Officials (CLHO) is the association for Oregon's 33 Local Public Health entities – a number of which are responsible for administering their county's Medical Examiner services. Because of this unique responsibility, the recent changes to the state ME services, and the ongoing workforce shortages, CLHO supports HB 4003. All parties need to come together in good faith to find workable solutions, and HB 4003 provides the framework to make that happen.

Thank you for your consideration of this measure. We'd appreciate your support.

