



To: Co-Chairs Senator Wlnsvey Campos and Representative Andrea Valderrama and Members of the Oregon Legislative Assembly Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Services

February 18, 2025

Co-Chairs Campos and Valderrama and members of the committee, on behalf of the Washington County Public Health Advisory Council, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of increased Public Health Modernization investments for the Oregon Health Authority Public Health Division in House Bill 5025.

A modern public health system ensures that everyone, no matter their zip code, is covered by the same essential public health services and protections. It is a system that has the proper resources, is prepared to address emerging health threats, and makes progress on eliminating health inequities.

Oregon has been working towards this vision of a transformed, modernized public health system since the Oregon Legislature passed House Bill 3100 in 2015. This added the Public Health Modernization framework to Oregon statute and provides flexible funding for the public health system to work across programs, address local priorities, and effectively serve their communities. Since then, the state has made incredible strides in building up public health infrastructure, addressing health inequities, and expanding into new and important areas of work. For example, Washington County and regional partners began creating a [heat-mapping tool](#) in July 2023. Over 100 volunteers measured temperatures across the region by attaching special equipment to their car windows; county staff and partners compiled the data into a map to identify the hottest neighborhoods in the region to be better prepared to respond to health concerns during extreme heat events. This climate and health work would not have been possible without Public Health Modernization funding.

However, Oregon's public health system does not have the resources it needs to fully transform and ensure everyone is covered by these same services and protections. [A 2016 assessment](#) found that the Oregon Health Authority and local public health authorities would need \$210 million every biennium to have a fully modernized public health system. To date, the Oregon Legislature has only invested [about half](#) of that amount, and the need has only increased as more partners (including Tribal Public Health Authorities and community-based organizations) receive funding to ensure Oregon is addressing health inequities.

To ensure Oregon's public health system is modern, nimble, and responsive to emerging health threats and can achieve the Oregon Health Authority's goal of eliminating health inequities in Oregon by 2030, we request that the Oregon Legislature fund Public Health Modernization in House Bill 5025 at \$25 million for the 2025-27 biennium.

Thank you for considering this important investment that serves and protects the health of everyone in Oregon.