

Submitter: Evelyn McCoy-Harris

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Human Services

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB5025

Dear Co-Chairs and Members of the Joint Human Services Ways & Means Committee:

My name is Evelyn McCoy-Harris, COO of Seed of Faith Ministries

Oregon's public health system includes federal, state, county, and local agencies, private organizations, community-based organizations, and other partners. Our organization represents one of the 195 community-based organizations that receives Public Health Modernization funding through the Oregon Health Authority.

As integral partners in the public health systems, community-based organizations work to minimize health risks and improve health outcomes. They strengthen the state's capacity to respond to emerging issues that threaten the health of Oregonians. CBOs are trusted within their local communities and are uniquely positioned to reach rural community members, people with disabilities, tribal members, and other culturally specific groups who are at greater risk of health disparities.

Our organization, Seed of Faith Ministries, provides the necessary elements for livability and sustainability: housing services. This social determinant of health is critical for the houseless population. Across two shelters, (202 beds), we provide heat, food, restrooms, clothing, overnight sleeping, and multiple wraparound health services. This population ALSO needs health services.

OHA's Current Public Health Modernization Budget is a \$110M General Fund and represents essential funding for Local Public Health Authorities, Tribal, OHA, and community-based organizations like ours who work in partnership with the State. Since the pandemic, the public health system has been building up the capacity to address public health needs throughout the state, but there is a great deal more work to be done as threats to our health and well-being persist.

We are requesting an additional investment of \$25M in the public health modernization budget. The additional \$2M proposed in the Governor's recommended budget does not provide the level of funding needed to address the unmet public health needs that exist in our state. Our organization's spending gap includes staff time and transportation costs to provide health services.

Thank you for your consideration of this important investment in Oregon's public health capacity.