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

My name is Shyloh West, and I am the Grant Manager and Tribal Liaison for The Arc Lane County, a nonprofit agency dedicated to supporting individuals who experience developmental disabilities in Lane County.

Oregon's public health system is a collaborative effort that involves federal, state, county, local agencies, private organizations, community-based organizations, and various partners. The Arc Lane County is proud to be one of 195 community-based organizations receiving Public Health Modernization funding through the Oregon Health Authority (OHA).

Community-based organizations (CBOs) play a vital role in the public health system by minimizing health risks and improving health outcomes. We strengthen the state's capacity to respond to emerging public health issues, especially by serving as trusted resources within our communities. This positioning enables us to effectively reach rural residents, individuals with disabilities, tribal members, and other culturally specific groups who are at higher risk of experiencing health disparities.

Individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) often encounter significant challenges in emergency preparedness and response, which can lead to disproportionate negative impacts during disasters. In response to these urgent public health needs, The Arc Lane County is dedicated to enhancing emergency preparedness through accessible and individualized strategies.

We are implementing the CMIST emergency framework, which focuses on key functional needs such as communication, maintaining health, independence, support, safety, self-determination, and transportation (Fordham, 2022). Additionally, we are utilizing Cognitopia, a web-based software suite designed to promote executive functioning and increase accessibility and independence for individuals with I/DD.

By addressing gaps in emergency preparedness for people with disabilities and leveraging technology, we aim to actively involve our community in developing personalized emergency plans, thereby fostering a more resilient environment equipped to handle emergencies.

The current Public Health Modernization budget stands at \$110 million from the General Fund, which is essential for local Public Health Authorities, tribal organizations, the OHA, and community-based organizations like ours that collaborate with the state. The ongoing efforts to strengthen public health



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capacity following the pandemic are commendable, yet there remains significant work to ensure comprehensive health and well-being across Oregon.

Thus, we respectfully request an additional investment of \$25 million into the Public Health Modernization budget. The proposed \$2 million increase in the Governor's recommended budget falls short of adequately addressing the unmet public health needs across our state. For instance, individuals with disabilities often lack preparedness for emergencies, resulting in elevated risks of injury and fatality during disasters (Adams, 2019; Smith, 2009).

Thank you for considering this crucial investment in Oregon's public health infrastructure. We appreciate the opportunity to share our initiatives and their positive impact on communities throughout the state.

Sincerely,

Shyloh West
The Arc Lane County