

Date March 4, 2025

TO: The Honorable Representative Thuy Tran, Chair
House Committee on Emergency Management, General Government, and
Veterans

FROM: Eric Gebbie, Director of Emergency Operations
Health Security, Preparedness and Response
Public Health Division
Oregon Health Authority

SUBJECT: No Position Testimony on House Bill 2346

Chair Tran and members of the committee, the Health Security, Preparedness, and Response Section of the Public Health Division is grateful for the opportunity to provide no position testimony on HB 2346.

For several years OHA's Health Security, Preparedness and Response Section has partnered with the team in the Oregon Department of Human Services' (ODHS) Office of Resilience and Emergency Management (OREM) through wildfires, extreme heat events, extreme winter weather, water access incidents, and of course the COVID-19 pandemic. OREM has provided life-saving support to Oregonians and, additionally, enabled public health initiatives and public health emergency response:

- OREM has enabled the distribution of air conditioners and air filtration devices, many funded through OHA programs, to protect vulnerable communities from extreme heat and wildfire smoke, through on-the-ground logistics, working with local partners and ODHS offices, and use of data to inform eligibility.
- OREM has regularly provided outreach directly to ODHS clients and individuals who use electrical medical devices, such as ventilators and oxygen concentrators, to verify they are safe in the face of evacuations.
- OREM has operated and supported shelters to keep people safe from extreme heat, extreme cold, and displacement from wildfires.
- OREM has distributed potable drinking water across Oregon, in response to local needs and in partnership with OHA to address the water issues in the Lower

Umpqua Basin Groundwater Management Area (LUBGWMA).

OREM has been uniquely positioned to support service to the most vulnerable Oregonians by nature of OREM's placement in ODHS, which already serves those communities. OREM has worked quickly and efficiently through those existing ODHS systems, processes and infrastructure, without requiring the creation of new systems and outreach.

All these efforts are of immediate value to Oregonians by keeping them safe. From a public health and health system perspective, these efforts also have the downstream benefits of protecting Oregon's hospital and health care system by preventing unnecessary hospital visits.

OHA's coordination with OREM has taken many forms: Our OHA incident response programs coordinate through the Oregon Department of Emergency Management. Our programs invite representatives from each other's programs to sit in most incident management teams that we activate, so that we can coordinate in real time. On the ground around Oregon, the OREM and OHA Regional Emergency Coordinators are in touch constantly, throughout the work week and physically side by side in communities' emergency operations centers.

OHA is happy to be a resource to you as you consider HB 2346. Thank you for the opportunity to provide this written testimony.