



# WASHINGTON COUNTY OREGON

March 25, 2025

Chair Nosse, Vice-Chairs Javadi and Nelson  
House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care  
900 Court Street NE, Room 453, HR-C  
Salem, Oregon 97301

Chair Nosse, Vice-Chairs Javadi and Nelson, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Alex Coleman, and I am the Quality, Workforce and Systems Senior Program Coordinator with the Washington County Public Health Division. I write to express my strong support for HB 3916, which addresses critical workforce development challenges for local public health (LPH) departments in Oregon. This bill represents a much-needed investment in the health workforce and helps ensure that Oregon communities have access to essential health and public health services.

Public health professionals work behind the scenes every day to protect and promote health and advance health equity in Oregon. Public health nurses, environmental health specialists, traditional health workers, epidemiologists, and more serve their communities and strive to give everyone the opportunity for a healthy life. However, this skilled workforce needs support and development. Longstanding trends, such as high rates of [burnout](#), [turnover](#), [sporadic funding](#), and difficulty in [recruitment](#) were exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. We must pursue solutions to bolster this workforce to protect health and well-being and to ensure everyone has access to foundational public health programs and services.

HB 3916's funding will help address these challenges by supporting workforce development, training, and retention, ensuring that public health departments can continue to serve our communities effectively. By providing targeted funding to organizations that serve and develop the public health workforce – like the Oregon Community Health Worker Association (ORCHWA) and the Oregon Office of Rural Health (ORH) – the bill will foster growth in essential healthcare and public health sectors, expand training opportunities, and provide much-needed financial support to trainees and employers alike.

As the state continues to make progress towards modernizing its governmental public health system, having a trained, responsive and valued workforce is not only vital, its required. One of the foundational capabilities adopted in the state's modernization framework calls out specifically maintaining a competent workforce and ensuring that we're providing continuing education and training to maintain that workforce ([ORS 431.136](#)). HB 3916 provides a mechanism for meeting that requirement.

I encourage the committee to support HB 3916 and invest in building the public health workforce so that everyone in Oregon has the opportunity for a healthy life. Thank you for your time and consideration of this important topic, and please reach out to me if you have any questions.

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