

January 31, 2013

TO: The Honorable Mitch Greenlick, Chair
House Committee on Health Care

FROM: Kathleen F. Carlson, MS, PhD

SUBJECT: Support for HB 2092, Injury Prevention Program Bill

Dear Chair Greenlick and members of the committee,

I am writing to encourage you to support HB 2092. This important bill would require Oregon Health Authority's (OHA) Public Health Division to establish and administer an injury and violence prevention program. Injury is the third leading cause of death in Oregon, behind only cancer and heart disease. Among children and young adults, it is *the* leading cause of death. Injury is also among the leading causes of hospitalization for all ages, and can be associated with lifelong disability for those who are injured, as well as substantial individual, family, and societal costs. In short, injury is an enormous public health problem.

Both unintentional and intentional injuries occur in systematic and predictable ways. They are, therefore, preventable. Examples of injury prevention measures that have saved innumerable lives and suffering include primary seatbelt laws, child passenger safety seats (car seats and, more recently, booster seats), home visitation programs, smoke alarms, window guards, mandatory reporting of maltreatment, and systematic screening for partner violence.

State injury prevention programs are absolutely crucial to the continued reduction of unintentional and intentional injuries; these programs provide the continued surveillance of trends and risk factors for injury, pointing the way to effective prevention strategies. HB 2092 would establish clear authority for the OHA to conduct population-based activities to reduce injury and violence in Oregon, and conduct activities with partners throughout the state to continue efforts to reduce injuries, including poisonings (e.g., drug overdoses), homicides, and suicides. Currently, OHA has regulatory authority to collect data on diseases but not injuries, a gap that can be addressed through HB 2092.

The OHA Injury and Violence Prevention Program (IVPP) is the primary resource in Oregon for state injury data. I have worked with IVPP staff on multiple occasions to better understand the statistics around injury and violence in our state. I have also partnered with (and am currently partnering with) IVPP program staff on projects ranging from falls prevention for older adults, motor vehicle crashes among new military veterans, and disparities in care for Oregonians

hospitalized with traumatic brain injury. I know that IVPP staff provide epidemiologic expertise, data, and technical assistance to numerous individuals, agencies, policy makers, and other stakeholders in the state. I hope that you will support HB 2092 in validation of these important efforts, an extension of OHA's authority to not only address disease but also injury, and – overall – one more way that Oregon can continue taking a lead in improving the public's health and safety.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Kathleen F. Carlson". The signature is written in black ink and includes a long horizontal flourish at the end.

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