

The Association of Oregon Counties Support HB 2348A

The Association of Oregon Counties supports the creation of a task force to develop a vision for the future of public health in Oregon. Local public health has been closely involved in both the transformation in the delivery of health care and the early learning initiative. After these massive transformations it is necessary to reflect on the public health functions in Oregon.

Counties have been working closely with CCOs to ensure that public health is an important aspect of the organization. Local Public Health emphasizes that we move the focus “upstream” and work on preventative measures to avoid costly medical expenses. In addition, Health Impact Assessments performed by public health provide an informational tool to help decision-makers consider the health implications of policies and decisions that may not have otherwise been considered.

Public health programs contribute to the goals of the early learning program: ensuring that every child in Oregon is ready to learn by kindergarten. Nurse home visiting programs and the public health run WIC program will coordinate with local early learning hubs to play a role in children’s health and make certain that health factors will present minimal barriers to their education.

Finally, there has already been a great deal of work occurring around the state working on reviewing the public health programs and services around the state. The Public Health Advisory Board has four subcommittees looking at cross-jurisdictional sharing. The purpose is to review existing examples of cross-jurisdictional sharing within the Oregon public health system, and identify the real-world barriers to the adoption and successful implementation of such models.

AOC would like to thank Representative Greenlick and Senator Steiner Hayward for their leadership on this issue. We look forward to working with other stakeholders to ensure the strength of the public health system in Oregon. If you have any questions on our position, please contact AOC staff Mark Nystrom (mnystrom@aocweb.org or 503-585-8351)