



Linn County Department of Health Services

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"Working together to promote the health and well-being of all Linn County residents."

Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Services Public Testimony on SB 5526 April 2, 2015

Good morning Co-Chairs Senator Bates and Representative Nathanson, and members of the Committee:

My name is Pat Crozier. I am the Public Health Program Manager at the Linn County Health Department and am here today supporting additional investments in public health to ensure our local health departments have the capacity to address the rising number of reportable diseases, and that access to reproductive health services remain available.

Today I would like to share with you the work we are doing in Linn County to address reproductive health issues and communicable diseases in our communities. Our reproductive health programs, offer free or low-cost reproductive health services and birth control for women, men and teens who need them. Our programs seeks to reduce unintended pregnancy in Linn County by providing access to information, services and resources necessary to ensure that all pregnancies are healthy, well timed and intended.

Last year, our reproductive health programs collectively saw 1814 individual clients, of whom 823 did not have any form of health insurance, and 877 new clients, indicating that a need for our services still remains in the community. Our Contraceptive Care (CCare) program alone provided payment for nearly 500 of those clients. It is ideal for women in Oregon to have access to full primary care. Nevertheless the funding we receive to support our CCare program has helped to save \$4,614,588 (based on the average cost of an OHP delivery) in labor and delivery costs, and \$17,028 in first year of infant healthcare costs.

In addition to reproductive health programs, our communicable disease program provides an essential and foundational public health service to our communities by halting the spread of diseases. Communicable disease staff work to control foodborne outbreaks, sexually transmitted diseases like gonorrhea and syphilis and ensure the proper treatment of multi-drug resistant tuberculosis. The following are some details of our work in Linn County:

- We had 889 reported diseases, each case involved investigative work, data entry and working with providers to answer questions and ensure proper treatment.

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- We have seen an increase in the number of cases of Sexually Transmitted Diseases including gonorrhea (up 100%), syphilis (up 25%), and chlamydia up (14%).
- We had 12 outbreaks, including pertussis, e-coli, and norovirus. Each occurrence required hours of investigation and interviews with affected persons, possibly collecting specimens, preparing the specimens to send to the lab, monitoring the results, calling the facility daily and giving guidance on the outbreak and how to stop the spread.
- During the Ebola outbreak— we monitored a person for 21 days in addition to working with hospitals and EMS to develop plans and provide training to prepare our community in case of an outbreak.

Linn County receives \$33,000 dollars in State funding to support our communicable disease work and even though our County provides \$294,939 in county general fund for our communicable disease program, we are rapidly falling behind in our ability to protect our citizens. As statewide funding has decreased we have found ways to sustain the effort and gain efficiencies with reduced staffing, a true testament to the work of our passionate and committed public health professionals. However, with rising costs we are unable to do more than barely maintain the infrastructure we need to do all the communicable disease work required. Current funding reductions at the Oregon Health Authority Public Health Division for Disease Intervention Specialists means more of this work will fall to the under resourced local health departments.

Maintaining current public health funding and investing in communicable disease will ensure that local public health programs are able to protect all Oregonians, especially our most vulnerable, by ensuring all Oregon women and men are able to meet their reproductive health needs, and that we have the staffing to prevent the spread of disease and protect the safety of our population.

I would like to thank you for allowing me to share the work that we do at the Linn County Health Department, and ask you to support the funding of this important public health work.

Sincerely,



Pat Crozier
Public Health Manager
Linn County Health Department