



House Human Services and Housing Committee
February 1, 2016
Support HB 4001

The Coalition of Local Health Officials represents the 34 Local Health Departments in Oregon who work to protect the public's health. Oregon's Local Health Departments supports legislation that creates and supports housing that is safe, affordable and stable like those in HB 4001.

Housing is well understood to be an important social determinant of health and well-being. Without adequate and stable housing, families have trouble managing their daily lives. When this happens, their health suffers.

According to a brief on housing and working families, housing is the greatest monthly expense for most people, and for people with lower incomes, a larger percentage of income must be used to make their rent or mortgage payments. High housing payments along with rising utility costs, force some families to choose between heating, eating, and filling prescriptions. These tradeoffs can threaten the health of all family members, particularly children. One study on residential mobility and childhood outcomes showed that children who lived in areas with higher rates of unaffordable housing tended to have worse health, more behavioral problems, and lower school performance.

Additionally, cost burdened adults are also more likely to report failure to fill a prescription or adhere to health care treatments as a result of cost. A study on housing and people living with chronic conditions found that affordable housing may help individuals living with chronic diseases to better maintain their treatment regimens and seek medical care more frequently.

When families have few affordable housing options, they may be forced to live in substandard housing that contributes to health problems such as infectious and chronic diseases, injuries and poor childhood development. Conditions such as water leaks, poor ventilation, dirty carpets and pest infestations can lead to increases in mold, mites and other allergens associated with poor health. A study on residential exposures and asthma approximates that 40% of diagnosed asthma among children is believed to be attributable to exposures in their own home.

Local health departments across Oregon work to improve the population's health. Good health depends on housing that is affordable, stable, safe and free from physical hazards.

We urge the House Human Services and Housing Committee to pass legislation that creates safe, stable, affordable housing for all Oregonians.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Executive Director
Coalition of Local Health Officials