

## Oregon Health Authority MacDonald

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**Request:** Retroactive authorization to apply for a competitive federal grant of up to \$200,000 per year for four years to strengthen surveillance of Hepatitis B and C viral infections.

**Recommendation:** Approve the request.

**Discussion:** The Oregon Health Authority (OHA) requests retroactive authorization to apply for the federal “Strengthening Surveillance in Jurisdictions with High Incidence of Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) and Hepatitis B Virus (HBV) Infections” grant through the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). According to the CDC’s grant announcement, a key purpose of the funding opportunity is to improve the identification and reporting of hepatitis cases to public health authorities in light of an increasing trend in cases across the nation.

The federal grant would enable the OHA Public Health Division to achieve two overarching goals of the agency’s grant proposal: 1) improve existing surveillance activities for acute and chronic HBV and HCV; and 2) develop surveillance for perinatal HCV. In general, the grant funding would help OHA accomplish these objectives by improving the completeness and timeliness of laboratory and case information reported to the CDC; supplement current case surveillance data with data from existing sources to estimate the risk populations for transmission of viral hepatitis; reduce cases of HBV and HCV through improved outbreak response; share data with local prevention and treatment programs; and help local programs implement testing, treatment, and prevention services.

The Public Health Division would leverage part of two existing staff positions to help complete the project’s objectives. The first is a Public Health Physician 2, which would oversee hepatitis surveillance and investigation efforts in the state. The second position is an Epidemiologist 2, which would serve as the grant project’s epidemiologist by evaluating current epidemiology of HBV and HCV, provide technical assistance to local health departments for investigation of viral hepatitis cases, and improve estimates of the risk factors for viral transmission. The Public Health Division also plans to contract with the Multnomah County Health Department to leverage a part-time epidemiologist to investigate cases of viral hepatitis through patient interview, chart review, and queries to clinics and hospitals.

The agency received the federal request for application on November 29, 2016 and submitted its application on January 31, 2017. The federal grant project period is for the four-year period of May 1, 2017 and April 30, 2021. The grant does not require state matching funds or maintenance of effort. OHA will return to the Legislative Assembly if it is determined a limitation increase for Federal Funds is needed.