



## Testimony in Support of House Bill 2310

April 7, 2017

House Health Care Committee

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Oregon Nurses Association

Chair Greenlick and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of the Oregon Nurses Association in support of House Bill 2310 which would begin the first phase of Public Health Modernization in Oregon.

The Oregon Nurses Association is Oregon's oldest and largest nursing union and professional association and is proud to represent nearly 15,000 registered nurses who work in almost every health care setting from large hospitals to small local clinics, from corrections to school-based health centers and in community-based public health.

Although 95% of Oregonians now have health insurance, there are still tremendous gaps in health across Oregon. For example, almost 1 in 10 Oregonians struggle with asthma, and more than 50% of Oregon adults suffer from one or more chronic diseases. These are not issues that can be fully addressed through access to health insurance alone: 80% of what shapes our health happens outside of our health provider's office.<sup>1</sup> Environmental factors can trigger asthma; nurses do home-visits to new mothers to help them learn how to care for their newborns; advertising and proactive policies help determine tobacco addiction; and access to safe water and food are all factors that profoundly affect Oregonians' health through the public health system.

ONA members see how these public health programs translate into better health outcomes at the bedside. Consequently, it also makes good economic sense: every \$1 spent on prevention saves \$5.60 in health care spending.<sup>2</sup>

House Bill 2310 is the first phase in implementing Public Health Modernization which will help ensure basic protections critical to the health of all people in Oregon and future generations. Public health protections include clean air, safe food and water, health promotion and prevention of diseases, and responding to new health threats. ONA supports the proposed amendment that would require modernization implementation in the 2017-19 biennium include communicable disease control and environmental health programs with an emphasis on leadership building, health equity, and assessment and epidemiology.

As a state, the next step in our health system transformation is to ensure that all Oregon communities have access to essential public health protections through Public Health Modernization. It's vital we work to build on Oregon's health model not only by working to improve access and delivery of health insurance, but also by expanding and improving our public health system. This will not only improve overall health outcomes but ultimately save money in the long run which is why **ONA encourages your support of House Bill 2310.**

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<sup>1</sup> <https://public.health.oregon.gov/About/TaskForce/Pages/index.aspx>.

<sup>2</sup> <http://healthyamericans.org/reports/prevention08/Prevention08.pdf>