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April 7, 2017

The Honorable Mitch Greenlich, Chair  
House Committee on Health Care  
900 Court St. NE, H-493  
Salem, Oregon 97301

Dear Representative Greenlich and other esteemed Health Care Committee members:

I am writing to support HB 2310 and funding to implement the first phase of Public Health Modernization with an amendment that will include the recommendations for 2017-19 implementation made by the Public Health Advisory Board.

In Klamath County, there is a belief that hard work and diligence will build a path to success. The area is along the Applegate Trail that brought immigrants to Oregon in an effort to live the American Dream. Part of that dream is the thought that all citizens have access to health and well-being.

Roads were built, fields were cleared and leveled, waterways harnessed, and sanitation put in place. Oregon's birth in 1859 was a testament to the Industrial Age. By the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, each county had a health officer who was most likely a doctor. Contagion was subdued by quarantine and vaccination.

Following the Spanish Flu outbreak, Public Health Nursing held sway in promoting community wellness through disease treatment. However, it was a trend that has set the tone for today. Proactive measures were replaced with reaction, which is to be expected in small doses. Today's reality is that Klamath County Public Health is placed at a disadvantage as limited resources relentlessly cause solutions to be minimal and without the necessary component of prevention.

Funding of Public Health Modernization would move all 34 of Oregon's public health departments beyond the historic treatment based concept. Chronic disease is the current reality and few, if any, counties are reaching the potential of optimized service through education and prevention. Today we operate on a statewide basis, through categorical funding streams, providing core services with limited ability to address local gaps in services.

Supporting Public Health Modernization will ensure equitable opportunities for health and eliminate gaps in health outcomes for all, improve childhood immunization rates, control the spread of communicable diseases, while increasing community capacity to identify, and respond, to environmental health hazards. In order to move Klamath County from its bottom ranking of Oregon's healthiest counties by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, I need to be able to tailor the work of my department to the needs of Klamath County residents. This is the reason that I whole-heartedly support HB 2130 and request that you join me.

Klamath's, and Oregon's, history is proactive and imbued with the idea that what we seek is within reach. Unfortunately, this is not a reality with the current governmental public health system in place.

There is no quick solution to the loss of timber payments or the environment of an increasingly obese and ailing populace. However, with the support of elected leaders such as yourself, we can begin to pave the way for a healthier future for all Oregonians.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Courtney Vanbragt". The signature is stylized, with a large initial "C" and a star-like flourish at the end of the name.

Courtney Vanbragt, Director  
Klamath County Public Health