



# Josephine County, Oregon

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## House Committee on Health Care Support House Bill 2310- Implementing Public Health Modernization

Oregon's 34 local public health departments focus on protecting children and families by preparing for, preventing and responding to illnesses and injuries caused by a variety of factors. We are submitting this letter to support HB 2310 and funding to implement the first phase of Public Health Modernization

Josephine County Public Health Department supports HB 2310 with an amendment that will include the recommendations for 2017-19 implementation made by the Public Health Advisory Board to implement aspects of the Communicable Disease and Environmental Health Foundational Programs and Assessment and Epidemiology, Leadership and Health Equity Foundation Capabilities. These areas build off of current capacity with a focus to greater accountability to improving health outcomes.

To do this, Oregon's public health system needs funding, we simply cannot afford to leave our public health departments underfunded and without adequate public health infrastructure. This funding is particularly critical to Counties that have been crippled by declining O&C funding, and inadequate tax base to support services that are foundational to the health security and welfare of our citizens. These Counties are often the home to some of our most vulnerable populations. Josephine County ranked 28<sup>th</sup> of 36 ranked counties in Health Outcomes in the recently published County Health rankings and 30<sup>th</sup> for length of life. Josephine County ranked 33 of 36 for social & economic factors with 33% of children under the age of 18 being raised in poverty. 49% of all pregnant women depend on WIC food vouchers to feed their families. The sexually transmitted disease infection rate is more than twice the Oregon average.

Redefining and expanding the work and expectations of public health can help improve the conditions that create opportunities for health. It is important to increase rural public health departments' capabilities to prevent and respond to emerging issues such as the rapid spread of sexually transmitted infections and other communicable diseases. Further, public health modernization support will further environmental work that can prevent chronic conditions such as asthma, obesity and access to safe food and drinking water.

The work of Oregon's local public health departments is essential to the health of communities across our state. The Josephine County Public Health Department urges your support of house bill 2310.

Sincerely,

"Partners In Prevention"

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