

Coos Health & Wellness

Together, Inspiring Healthier Communities



April 7, 2017

House Committee on Health Care

Re: 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

Coos Health and Wellness 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 until a horrific epidemic, disaster or outbreak occurs. Supporting public health will ensure fair opportunities for health and eliminate gaps in health outcomes, slow the spread of Chlamydia, Gonorrhea and Syphilis and other communicable diseases, improve childhood immunization rates, and increase community capacity to identify, and respond, to environmental health hazards.

Redefining and expanding the work and expectations of public health can help improve the conditions that create opportunities for health. A well-supported public health system will allow Coos Health and Wellness to shift from a too often underfunded response to a local crisis to better planned, well-funded proactive and preventative work to support the health and wellness of our community. This includes strengthening the work we are conducting with community partners to ensure that the public's health is well supported and that our actions are well integrated, proactive and answer our local community needs.

The work of Oregon's local public health departments is essential to the health of communities across our state. Coos Health and Wellness urges your support of house bill 2310.

Sincerely,

Florence Pourtal-Stevens, Public Health Administrator

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