



April 7, 2017

Chair Mitch Greenlick
House Committee on Health Care
900 Court St. - State Capitol
Salem, OR 97301

Chair Greenlick and members of the Committee:

My name is Stacy Cowan and I am the Public Sector Public Policy Strategist with SEIU Local 503. I would like to provide testimony in support of HB 2310. SEIU represents nearly 60,000 publically funded workers in the state of Oregon, including the frontline workers at the Oregon Health Authority, Public Health division.

In July 2015, the Oregon legislature passed House Bill 3100 which set in motion the process of Public Health Modernization. Since then a great deal of work has taken place with state and local public health professionals and community partners to modernize the public health system in Oregon.

HB 2310 is one of the first legislative outcomes from this process. It makes some administrative adjustments that readies the state and local public health system to maximize the efficient use of resources and for new investments.

I would like to respectfully remind the committee and the legislature that the current version of HB 2310 does not provide additional funds needed to begin the process of modernizing the public health system in earnest. We cannot expect a high performing public health system if we don't provide the resources.

The original assessment of Oregon's public health system found that Oregon is one of the worst funded public health systems in the nation per capita. Given that there have been no new investments since this original observation, this reality has not changed.

The Public Health community in Oregon has done its part in going through a community-informed process of identifying and quantifying the strengths and shortcomings of the system. The culmination of that work lead to a "Task Force on the Future of Public Health Services Report" which detailed the need of an eventual sustained investment of an additional \$105 million annually.

SERVICE EMPLOYEES
INTERNATIONAL UNION
LOCAL 503

PO Box 12159
Salem, OR 97309-1259

1730 Commercial St. SE
Salem, OR 97302

6401 SE Foster Rd.
Portland, OR 97206

1.800.452.2146
www.seiu503.org

Adequately funding public health in Oregon is not a luxury but a critical need and would set Oregon on a path to sustainable budget growth in the long-term. For example, a \$2.4 million investment in high-poverty local communities can expect to reduce premature births by 1% saving \$4.9 million in prenatal care and delivery hospital costs.

I urge the committee to pass HB 2310 and additionally consider ways to fund Public Health Modernization.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.