



April 7, 2017

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.

Washington County Department of Health and Human Services 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.

In our leadership roles within Washington County Department of Health and Human Services we have firsthand knowledge of the need for increased funding for Oregon's public health system. The current public health system and funding does not meet the needs of Washington County residents. 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. Funding through this bill builds upon support already provided by Washington County government to focus our resources and efforts on the highest priorities for public health. As a department, we have already begun internal changes to shift resources and priorities but still have gaps in meeting our community needs. New resources will support our capacity to enhance important public health services and perform our work more efficiently.

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

Sincerely,

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