



OHA Public Health Division Budget Hearing
Joint Committee on Ways and Means – Human Services Subcommittee
Tuesday, March 26, 2019

Senator Lee Beyer, Co-Chair
Representative Rob Nosse, Co-Chair

It is my honor today as the Director of Emergency Management for Columbia County Oregon to offer testimony in support of the **Oregon Public Health Division, Health Security, Preparedness and Response program**. A modern, collaborative, and robust public health system ensures that the whole community in Oregon has protections and resources to address health threats and eliminate health disparities to vulnerable populations.

We work closely with our public health emergency preparedness partners on a daily basis. In fact, we value this collaborative effort so much that our Public Health Emergency Preparedness Coordinator is co-located with us in our Emergency Operations Center. This allows us to monitor emerging health issues in real time and greatly speeds our response to emerging health challenges. Public health plays a critical role in emergency preparedness, planning, response, and recovery since any incident, regardless of size or scope, involves the public health, especially as it impacts our most vulnerable populations.

I encourage you to support properly funding this critical preparedness and response capability. The relationship between Public Health and Emergency Management is the foundation upon which all our efforts are based. This is true not just in a catastrophic scenario such as the Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake, but also during such common occurrences as winter storms, drinking water availability, chemical exposures, and infectious disease outbreaks.

Semper Paratus,

Steve Pegram

Steve Pegram
Director
Columbia County Office of Emergency Management