



PUBLIC HEALTH

PREVENT. PROMOTE. PROTECT.

Public Health

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Communicable Disease

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Emergency Preparedness

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Environmental Health

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Maternal Child Health

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Prevention

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Vital Records

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WIC

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March 26, 2019

Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Services
Senator Lee Beyer, Co-Chair

RE: SB 5525 - OHA Budget

Dear Co-Chairs Beyer and Nosse, and Members of the Committee:

Lane County appreciates the opportunity to share our experience in local public health and to support funding for public health modernization as part of SB 5525.

“An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure” is an old idea but it doesn't happen without purpose and planning. Across the state, Public Health serves as the community health strategist to prevent death, disease, and disability and address emerging threats to health, security, and equity. And investment in Public Health ensures the success of related systems in the community by ensuring that we can continue to move upstream and improve health rather than only responding to emergencies and acute needs.

There are two things regarding the modernization effort and the requisite funding request I want to emphasize for the Committee:

- It is critical that we have the staff and the tools to understand, contain, and mitigate the effects of infectious diseases and contaminants in our environments. Twenty-four hour response and local coordination of services are core system functions as outlined in Oregon's Public Health Modernization Manual.
- Prevention is the essential role that Public Health plays in the health system and in our communities. We anticipate the wide range of diseases and conditions and negative outcomes that can

and do impact our region. Through coordinating prevention services with other partners in our counties, Public Health creates the conditions in which individuals, families, neighborhoods, and larger communities can achieve optimal health.

Our outcomes are clear. Lane County's WIC program serves almost 40% of pregnant women (about 7,400 women and children monthly) and has satellite clinics in Springfield, Oakridge, Cottage Grove, and Florence. Our environmental health specialists each have an assigned region and personally inspect every licensed facility and many unlicensed facilities within our region, including every restaurant, food cart, food booth, public pool, hotel, motel, organizational camp, and RV park, and many day cares, Greek houses, and school cafeterias. The environmental health specialists work closely with our communicable disease nurses to control outbreaks in facilities - long term care and schools are the most common sites of those outbreaks. We have worked hard over the past few years to improve our response to gastrointestinal (GI) and respiratory outbreaks, to control the spread of disease and mitigate the effects on children and the elderly.

While an inspection and follow up in one facility (the prevention work) might take an hour or two a year, an outbreak in a facility will take at least several hours to investigate and control and sometimes several weeks to contain. In addition to added time and resources, there is also the entirely preventable pain and suffering associated with disease outbreaks.

Finally, community-wide prevention is also essential for the success of other key systems in our communities. For health system transformation to be successful in Oregon and for all the investments made to have the intended impact, public health and prevention must be strengthened. Prevention is be key to curbing future cost increases in these arenas.

Thank you for your consideration and for supporting a strong public health system as part of SB 5535.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jocelyn Warren', with a large, stylized initial 'J'.

Jocelyn Warren, PhD, MPH
Public Health Manager