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## Planned Parenthood Advocates of Oregon

March 26, 2019

Co-Chairs Beyer and Nosse and Members of the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Services:

Planned Parenthood Advocates of Oregon respectfully requests that the committee fully fund the Oregon Health Plan and Reproductive Health Program, as included within SB 5525, the proposed budget for the Oregon Health Authority (OHA). More than 50 percent of Planned Parenthood's patients rely on Medicaid for critical preventive healthcare services. Medicaid is a critical source of health coverage for women, with about 1 in 5 women of reproductive age relying on Medicaid for their health care and women accounting for approximately 62 percent of Medicaid enrollees. No one should have to face bankruptcy or serious illness just because they can't afford care. Furthermore, access to reproductive health services, including contraception, has far-reaching benefits for our community at large.

The Reproductive Health Program, administered by OHA's Public Health Division, implements the Reproductive Health Equity Fund, our state's landmark program that ensures all Oregonians have access to the full spectrum of reproductive health services, as well as the Contraceptive Care Program (CCare). Family planning is a smart investment that saves Oregon taxpayers millions of dollars every year. In fact, CCare is one of the most cost-effective state programs, saving the state \$22.8 million from the reduction in unintended pregnancy in 2017 alone. About 14 percent of Oregon Contraceptive Care clients have an unintended pregnancy averted through the provision of effective contraceptive methods and counseling services. Moreover, this program has a 9-to-1 federal match, so for every \$1 of state investment, we leverage \$9 of federal matching funds. This is why we strongly support SB 5525 which allocates sufficient funding to maintain the current CCare service level.

PPAO further requests the committee's continued support of public health modernization. A modern public health system ensures every person in Oregon has access to high quality and culturally appropriate preventive health care, and that the public health system is engaged daily to eliminate health disparities; it approaches today's complex health issues using interventions that are grounded in a common set of strategies<sup>1</sup>. These common strategies can be used for all public health issues, including reproductive health access.

Public health strategies – including those for Health Equity and Cultural Responsiveness and Community Partnership Development – are at the core for how public health, health care providers and community partners are working together to improve access to reproductive health services. Local public health authorities (LPHAs) are central to community participation and education efforts that ensure linkages to clinical services for priority populations, including youth and young adults, those not covered under federal programs because of citizenship status, and those who are historically not well served by the health care system.

Rooted in public health modernization's core strategies<sup>2</sup>, the OHA Reproductive Health Program

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<sup>1</sup> Within the framework for public health modernization, these common strategies are referred to as foundational capabilities. They include Health Equity and Cultural Responsiveness, Community Partnership Development, Assessment and Epidemiology, Policy and Planning, Communications, Leadership and Organizational Competencies, and Emergency Preparedness and Response.

<sup>2</sup> Oregon Health Authority (2017). Public Health Modernization Manual. Available online at:

provides funding and technical support to LPHAs to convene coalitions of providers and community-based organizations to assess and address barriers and gaps in access to reproductive health services, especially those that impact communities already experiencing disparities. It is this coalition-building that ultimately can enhance access to appropriate family planning services across the state.

For example, Washington County Department of Health & Human Services launched the Reproductive Health Coalition of Washington County which has been meeting to actively address access to reproductive health services within Washington County. This group of committed partners has already developed a work plan and is working to achieve stated goals and ultimately evaluate their impact. Membership includes reproductive health clinical service providers as well as larger health systems and community-based organizations.

In 2017, the Legislature invested \$5 million in public health modernization. The majority of these funds were distributed to LPHAs and partners to develop new systems for communicable disease control and eliminate related health disparities. Some LPHA partnerships are using these funds for sexually transmitted infection (STI) prevention and control<sup>3</sup>. For example:

- In eastern Oregon, 13 LPHAs are partnering to engage community-based organizations to decrease gonorrhea rates through shared education and targeted interventions. This group is partnering with Yellowhawk Tribal Health Center, The Next Door, and other community organizations on strategic interventions to reduce the spread of STIs. Between July-December 2018, 3,600 condoms were distributed through this partnership.
- Jackson and Klamath counties are collaborating with the Southern Oregon Regional Health Equity Coalition to launch LGBTQ+ Health + Wellness Summit to improve access to quality health care services for LGBTQ+ community members. These counties are also launching an HPV vaccination campaign this spring.
- Marion and Polk counties, with Willamette Valley Community Health CCO, convened a Communicable Disease Task Force to develop regional STI prevention strategies. This group is providing training to health care providers and partnering with a local organization that serves the Hispanic community.

For these reasons we thank you for continuing to prioritize funding for OHP, the Reproductive Health Program, and public health modernization.

Sincerely,

Laurel Swerdlow, MPH  
Policy Director  
Planned Parenthood Advocates of Oregon

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[https://www.oregon.gov/oha/PH/ABOUT/TASKFORCE/Documents/public\\_health\\_modernization\\_manual.pdf](https://www.oregon.gov/oha/PH/ABOUT/TASKFORCE/Documents/public_health_modernization_manual.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> Oregon Health Authority (2018). Public Health Modernization Implementation: Interim Evaluation Report. Available online at: <https://www.oregon.gov/oha/PH/ABOUT/Documents/PH-Modernization-Interim-Report-9-2018.pdf>.