



March 25, 2019

Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Services
2019 Legislative Session

RE: Washington County Health and Human Services Testimony on SB 5525

Dear Co-Chair Beyer, Co-Chair Nosse and Members of the Subcommittee,

As the Assistant Director for Washington County Health and Human Services (HHS), and on behalf of Washington County, thank you for the opportunity to testify today on SB 5525.

As a strong partner and collaborator with the Oregon Health Authority, Washington County HHS supports the budget priorities outlined in SB 5525 and the triple aim vision for Oregon: better health, better care and lower costs. Washington County HHS supports the following priorities due to the impact they will have on the lives of all Oregonians:

Maintain funding levels for public health and behavioral health to meet the growing needs of our state and local community.

This includes the coordinated care organizations (CCOs), regulating the EMS system, jail diversion, opioid and addiction prevention and treatment and other vital services. The important role of protecting our communities is achieved through our ability to ensure adequate funding, regulation, clear local authority and accountability.

Increase public health modernization funding, with emphasis on communicable diseases and health equities.

Support continued state funding and implementation of public health modernization plan to ensure counties are better prepared to prevent the spread of communicable and emerging diseases, address water and climate issues, and eliminate health disparities.

Ensure adequate funding for public health prevention focused on addiction and opioid epidemic, tobacco, marijuana, e-cigarettes, obesity and alcohol, with emphasis on prevention efforts for youth.

Our CCO model includes investments in the Local Public Health Authority (LPHA) for community-based prevention and evidence-based strategies that target reducing rising obesity rates; reducing adult tobacco use and preventing youth from getting addicted; reducing the number of low birth weight babies and supporting infants and children; for growth and development; and reducing opioid and other substance abuse/misuse disorders. Reducing obesity rates and improving physical activity and nutrition can reduce health care costs through fewer doctor's office visits, fewer prescriptions, lower emergency department costs and reduced admissions to the hospital.

Increase access to supported, affordable low barrier housing.

Supportive and residential housing services are wraparound social services that aim to increase an individual or family's ability to live consistently in stable housing. Available research suggests that supportive/residential housing services improve successful permanent housing.

Washington County supports the following policy option packages (POPs):

- OHA POP 401 – Universal Home Visiting
- OHA POP 402 – Expand behavioral health services with a focus on preventing youth suicide
- OHA POP 417 – Support local communicable disease outbreak surveillance programs at the current service level
- OHA POP 408 – Continue mental health funding by restoring dollars previously backfilled by marijuana revenue
- OHA POP 410 – Better serve “Aid and Assist” defendants for community restoration
- OHA POP 413 – Fill the funding gap in behavioral health resulting from the shortfall in tobacco tax revenue

In closing, I want to thank you for considering these budget priorities and would like to emphasize Washington County’s strong support of the Oregon Health Authority and SB 5525.

Sincerely,



Mjere Simantel, MSW

Assistant Director

Washington County Health and Human Services