

**Testimony text by Dr. James A. Gaudino, Jr. MD, MPH, MS, FACPM
for the Oregon Legislature Joint Ways and Means, Joint Health Services Sub-Committee
Oregon Capitol Hearing Room (remote), February 9, 2021**

PLEASE Support Full Funding >\$68.9 million for Public Health Modernization:

BY increasing allocations in

1) House Bill HB 5024 2021

As a start! And with,

2) Additional, Innovative Funding built in other legislation this year!

Short 3-4 min testimony with added information:

Thank you, Co-Chairs Senator Kate **Lieber** and Representative **Nosse** and other distinguished members of this sub-committee

I am Dr James A. Gaudino. I am an Oregonian, a Prevention & Public Health Specialist Physician, a Primary Care Physician, a Senior Medical Epidemiologist and an Affiliate Professor with the OHSU-PSU School of Public Health.

I am also an engaged member (and leader) within the Oregon and American Public Health Associations.

(OPHA represents over 400 public health practitioners, students and affiliate professionals in Oregon and APHA over 25,000 in the US.)

I am speaking *in earnest today* on behalf millions of Oregonians who need and benefit from the *on-the-ground* public health threat responses, mitigation, prevention and public health protections in their communities BY the PUBLIC HEALTH system every day,

Especially for those who continue to be inequitably impacted by preventable health threats and needless suffering, and who remain chronically disenfranchised and underserved

These include Black, Brown, Indigenous and other color peoples and many others who uphold and enrich our communities.

I ask all legislators to URGENTLY support **full funding (\$69 million) for Public Health Modernization starting with HB 5024.**

BECAUSE I am concerned about the health and wellbeing of ALL Oregonians *NOT ONLY to be able to survive BUT to live up* to each person's lifetime potential,

---not just being free from suffering, disability, illness and premature death.

Before this pandemic, Our Public Health system has continued to be chronically weakened and disabled.

YET It is THIS system, *distinct from health care*, that BOTH responds to public health THREATS

BUT also works to prevent illness, injuries, disabilities, costly healthcare and other expenditures and death in our communities!

Public Health seeks and uses evidence, community input and mobilization and leverages partnerships to get things done!

It's *the only* system in our communities with the experienced workforce uniquely able to work this way

COVID-19 IS a wake-up call to us ALL, *Oregon needs a fully functional public health system*

But also, just this last year alone, our communities and the public health system **have faced at least 5 major public health threats:**

-- **COVID-19.**

-- An "**Info-demic**" of misinformation about COVID-19, vaccinations, and many other issues (as described by the World Health Organization (WHO)).

- A “**Fear-demic**” across our communities about the impacts of the pandemic on their, their loved ones’ and community’s lives and wellbeing and their futures.
- **Magnification of the Impacts of unrelenting systemic racism and violence** as experienced by Black, Brown, Indigenous and other communities of color, including Pacific Islanders, leading to greater inequities in poor health, reduced wellbeing and greater losses in life among these community members.
- **Real-time Impacts on health and wellbeing from evolving Climate Disasters** due to accumulated greenhouse gas (carbon pollution) with the massive forest conflagrations and widespread toxic smoke exposures experienced by communities for months throughout the entire western United States, including Oregon.

Understandably, Oregon’s public health system has become overwhelmed with an under-supported professional workforce and which lacks the numbers of professionals needed.

This is Because of ongoing neglect in INVESTING wisely into this system by our state legislature and local leaders, Decades of decreased Federal funding and support & Growing COMPLEX public health threats that our communities are experiencing!

Oregon remains close to rock bottom among states in public health sector investments !.

Worse now, then when Oregon was ranked 47th among states in per capita funding ten years ago (RWJ Foundation).

Settled evidence for over 25 years TELLS us that health care *ONLY contributes to ~ 10%* of what preserves good health and prevents pre-mature death and disability. (see graph)

Whereas, the Public health system actually operates within our communities where ALL people live, work and play AND

WHERE communities can address the OTHER 90% of the factors can help people keep healthy, stay safe and avoid premature death and disabilities —

Yet, we direct roughly 85-90 % of our health dollars to Health Care! And Ignore public health

FULLY FUNDING Local, Tribal and State public health authorities and their partners ASSURES that skilled public health professionals working ON-THE-GROUND with an Empowered community– WILL address LOCAL NEEDS where it matters!

The Public Health Modernization initiative is evidence-rich, carefully planned and multi-stakeholder-vetted!

Yes, we are asking much more *because* to fully fund Oregon’s Public Health system WILL TAKE funds far beyond the Governor’s OHA request of \$30 million for Public Health Modernization in this coming biennium as OTHER reports to the legislature have stated!

Prevention is about the future. Please Invest the needed \$69 million NOW

Seven generations of Oregonians are in your hands, please take BOLD actions THIS Session

Thank you! I would be happy to answer questions now and in the future.

Respectfully and kindly submitted,

Dr. Jim Gaudino, Jr

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Integrity, Equity, and Evidence in Policies Impacting Health

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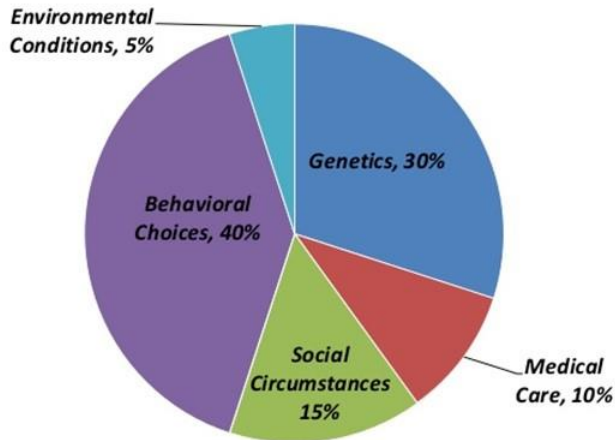
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**Invest NOW in Fully Funding >\$68.9 million dollars
for Public Health Modernization & Empower All
Oregon Communities to be Healthier...**

Factors Influencing Health



McGinnis et al, Health Affairs, Vol 22 (2)



**...by Addressing More of the
"Other" 90% Factors and
Structures Contributing to Health
where People Live, Work and Play**

