

SB 1554 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Health Care

Action Date: 02/07/22

Action: Do pass and requesting referral to Ways and Means.

Vote: 3-1-1-0

Yeas: 3 - Beyer, Manning Jr, Patterson

Nays: 1 - Linthicum

Exc: 1 - Kennemer

Fiscal: Fiscal impact issued

Revenue: No revenue impact

Prepared By: Daniel Dietz, LPRO Analyst

Meeting Dates: 2/2, 2/7

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Directs the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) to contract with a neutral, third-party consultant to study and report on the state's public health response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Requires an initial report no later than November 15, 2022, addressing funding, coordination of resources, public health mandates, messaging, and outcomes. Requires a subsequent report to a committee of the Legislative Assembly no later than April 1, 2023, reviewing the COVID-19 pandemic broadly, summarizing key lessons learned, and identifying areas of the public health system that need improvement. Requires OHA to provide a final report no later than September 1, 2023, with a final analysis including findings and recommendations. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Third-party consultant or consultants to perform study
- Timeframes for study and reports to the Legislative Assembly
- Scope of study and impact of public health mandates

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

On March 8, 2020, the Governor of the State of Oregon declared a state of emergency pursuant to ORS 401.165 et seq. to address the spread of COVID-19, directing an immediate response from partners in Oregon's public health system, including state and local agencies, hospitals and medical providers, businesses, schools, and individuals. As the COVID-19 pandemic continued, the state of emergency has been renewed and remains in effect as of January 28, 2022, when Oregon's [official report](#) included 620,652 total cases of COVID-19 and 6,086 total deaths.

Oregon's public health response to the COVID-19 pandemic has included federal, state, and local resources and coordination between public, private, and nonprofit sectors. Measures have included requirements for use of personal protective equipment, limits on in-person gatherings, temporary closure of specified businesses, suspension of in-person learning, and moratoria on residential evictions and foreclosure. Throughout the pandemic, the state has coordinated testing, reporting, and communications about COVID-19. When available hospital beds became scarce, the state deployed additional resources. When vaccines became available, the state facilitated distribution and issued requirements for health care workers and public employees.

Senate Bill 1554 requires the Oregon Health Authority to study the efficacy of the state's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and identify recommendations for improvements to Oregon's public health system.