

Submitter: Tetyana Sydorenko
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Health Care
Measure: SB1529

Dear Committee,

The original language of this bill has been completely revised to now give unlimited powers to the Public Health Director. There are no checks and balances in place. The language of the bill is completely vague under which conditions the power to declare public health emergency is available to the Public Health Director.

Under the bill, the Public Health Director – an unelected official who is an at-will employee of the OHA director – would have the power to determine a “health care emergency,” a power that currently only the Governor has. Democratic legislators said the purpose of the bill was to allow the OHA to more easily deploy volunteer health care workers to hospitals experiencing staffing issues. While this is a good reason for the bill, it's unclear why the Public Health Director needs emergency powers.

I am completely opposed to bills such as this which give unlimited power to various officials, without the necessary provisions to make sure those powers are not overextended. The intentions of the bill may be good, but the language is too vague. This is not a good bill and I very much oppose it.