

Public Testimony: Support SB 564

Senate Healthcare Committee
Wednesday, January 1st, 2023



SO Health-E
Advocating for Health Equity

The Need for SB 564

1. RHECs build trust and capacity within communities most impacted by health inequities by showing up consistently
2. **This is resource intensive work that must be consistent over time to be effective**
3. RHECs are a critical bridge during times of crises
4. **RHEC workload, costs grow, funding at 2014 level**
5. **Now is the time to invest in capacity building and resilience, well ahead of the next public health emergency or disaster**

Role of RHECs in Oregon's Public Health System

Foundational functions of a community

- Building trust
- Building capacity
- Bridging silos to better serve community
- Innovation

Community Voice in State Policy

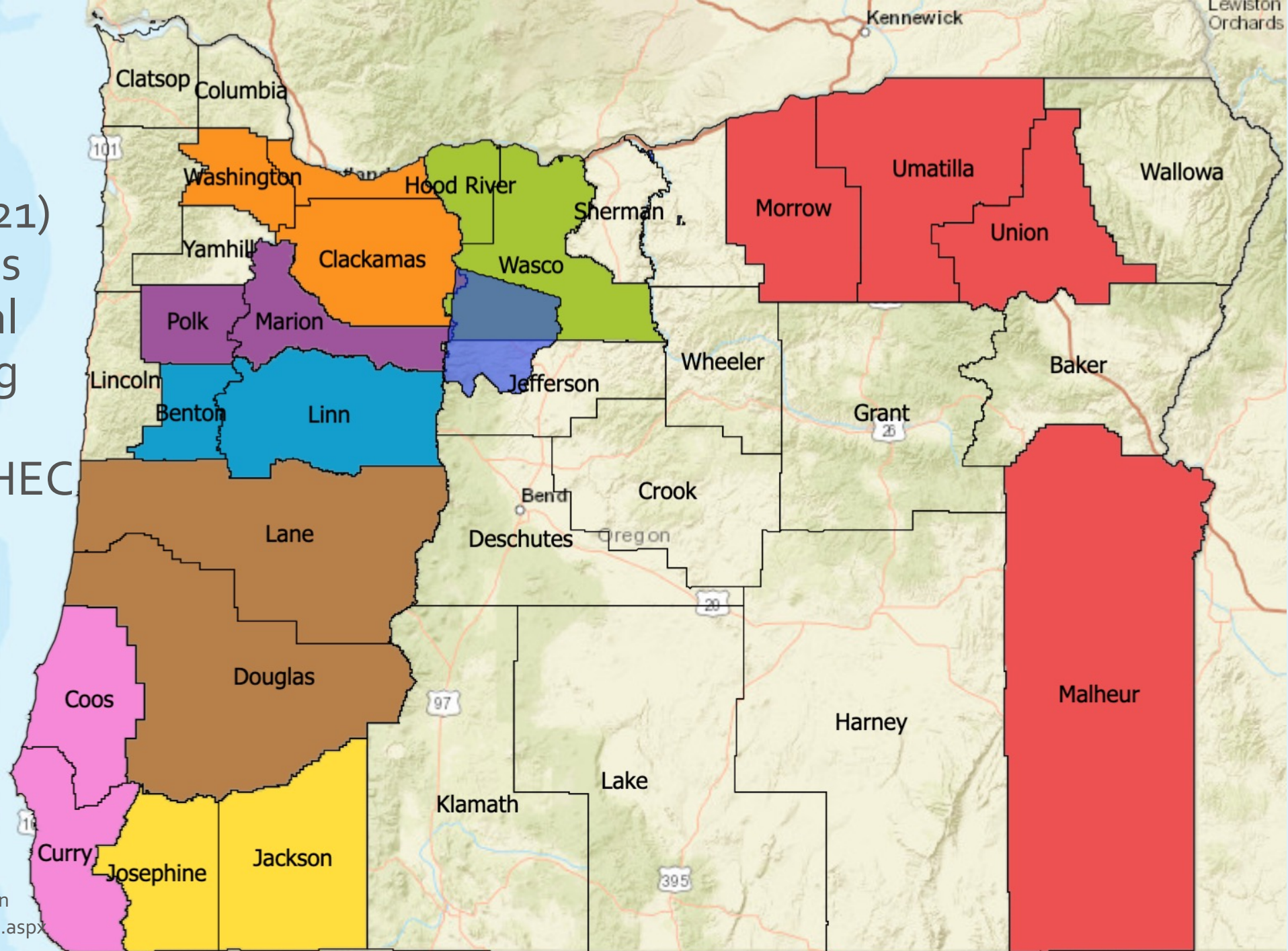
Mobilizing in times of crises



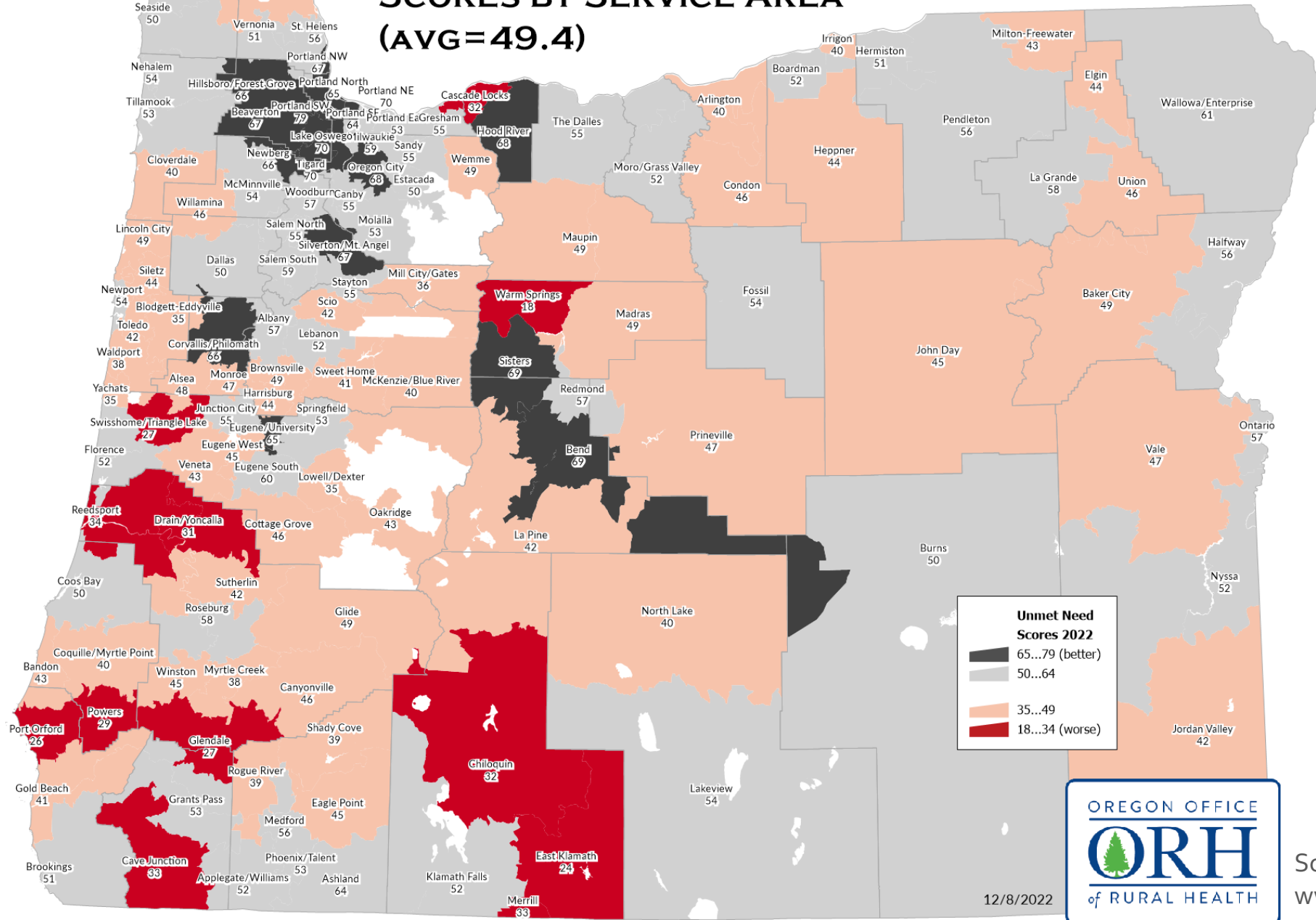
Current RHEC Regions 2023

Senate Bill 70 (2021)

- Brought RHECs back to original level of funding after cuts
- Defined the RHEC model
- Funded 4 new RHECs



2022 AREAS OF UNMET HEALTH CARE NEED SCORES BY SERVICE AREA (AVG=49.4)



Source: Oregon Office of Rural Health
www.ohsu.edu/media/106491

12/8/2022

Covid-19 Response

Established trust and communication

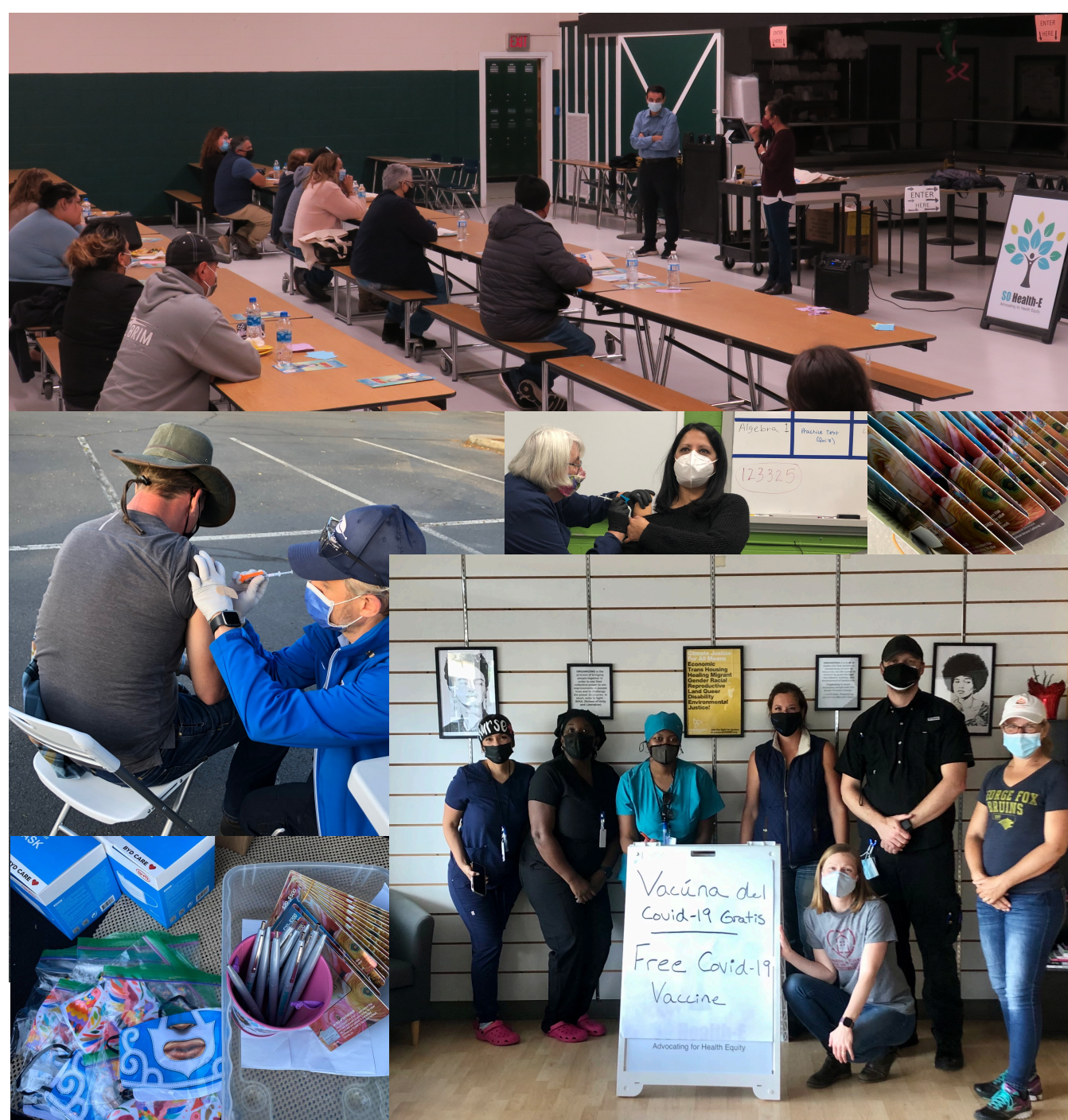
Listening to community needs

Plain language, language access resources

- Covid-19 information in English and Spanish
- Testing and vaccine resources
- Q & A events, vaccine events

Responsive Relief

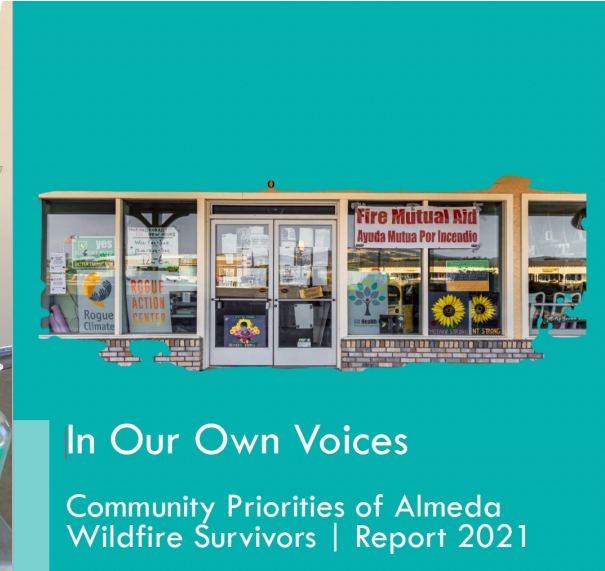
- Farmworker aid during first months
- Groceries and gas gift cards
- Help with winter heating and utility bills
- School supplies and laptops
- Mental health resources
- Protective masks and air filters



Wildfire Relief

Almeda and Obenchain

- Providing relief within 24 hours
- Established relationships with vulnerable communities and with key local partners
- Water, food, diapers, phone charging stations, personal toiletries, pet food, formula
- Language access
- FEMA & OHCS application assistance
- Hotel stays in the first weeks after the fire
- Food and gas gift cards
- Resource navigation and referral
- First months rent & deposit for 60 families



In Our Own Voices
Community Priorities of Almeda
Wildfire Survivors | Report 2021



Why SB 564 Matters for Oregon Communities

Adequately capacitate RHEC Program to:

- Meet current workload and prevent burnout
- Meet growing costs due to inflation
- Honor the time and lived experience expertise of community members serving on committees and workgroups

Proactively invest in expanding counties served by RHECs ahead of the next crisis:

- SB 564 funds 5 new RHECs in counties not currently served by the program

Thank you!



SO Health-E
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