



OREGON COALITION OF LOCAL HEALTH OFFICIALS

Representing the collective interests of Oregon's 33 local public health authorities to improve the health of all Oregonians.

oregonclho.org

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House Behavioral Health and Health Care Committee
CLHO Testimony on Rural Provider Tax Credit

The Coalition of Local Health Officials (CLHO) is a membership association that works to ensure Local Public Health Authorities (LPHAs) have the ability and resources to improve the health of all people living in Oregon, and at the most basic level, properly address public health needs and protect communities.

As this committee has heard from CLHO numerous times this session, the local public health workforce, across the United States and here in Oregon, is in crisis. This crisis is further exacerbated in rural and frontier counties, impacting access to care at all levels, from the clinical setting to chronic disease prevention resources. LPHAs are the first line of defense to keeping Oregonians healthy.

Public health nurses are a key part of this defense. Public health nurses work across all public health programs to provide essential services to their communities. These services include cancer screenings, communicable disease testing and treatment, immunizations, birth control, healthy starts for new moms and their babies, and more. They are part of the primary care continuum by preventing illness, promoting health, and providing clinical services and serving as a safety net for the most vulnerable people in their communities.

However, LPHAs across Oregon have struggled to attract and retain nurses since before the COVID-19 pandemic. In a recent survey, 22 out of the 27 LPHAs that responded had at least one nurse vacancy,

