

March 14, 2023

Dear Senate Committee on Health Care:

RE: Testimony for Senate Bill 965

Chair Patterson, Vice-Chair Hayden, members of the committee, my name is Veronica Irvin and I am an Associate Professor of Public Health at Oregon State University, but I am here today testifying from my role as the Chair of the Oregon Public Health Advisory Board. I am here to share information about -2 amendment to Senate Bill 965.

The Public Health Advisory Board is a 17-member, Governor-appointed board with a direct relationship to the Oregon Health Policy Board. Public Health Advisory Board members include local public health administrators, a local health officer, health systems representatives, a representative of Oregon's federally-recognized Tribes, academic and public health experts and OHA leadership, among others. The Public Health Advisory Board is geographically diverse, with members based in Washington, Multnomah, Marion, Coos, Lane, Douglas, Baker, Jefferson, Wallowa, Benton and Clackamas counties. The Public Health Advisory Board has substantial responsibility to provide leadership and guidance for public health matters across the state and statutory roles related to modernizing Oregon's public health system as outlined in ORS 431.123.

The Public Health Advisory Board spent the better half of last year thoughtfully updating its charter and bylaws and reaffirming its responsibilities to the public health system. During this process members determined that the Public Health Advisory Board must be inclusive of more partners that have traditionally been left out of public health decision-making. The Public Health Advisory Board has rooted its decision-making in its Health Equity Review Policy and Procedure and the Oregon Health Policy Board's definition of health equity, which specifically calls for "the equitable distribution or redistribution of resources and power; and recognizing, reconciling and rectifying historical and contemporary injustices." Ensuring representation of groups that experience injustices on advisory boards like ours is one-way Oregon can be more inclusive and ensure the board's decisions support the elimination of health inequities.

In addition to approving a new charter and bylaws in late 2022, the board also unanimously approved a proposal to enhance representation on the board to better achieve the objectives set forward in the updated charter. These positions include:

- Two community-based organization representatives: one from a rural area and one from an urban area;
- One expert in health equity; and
- One representative from the early childhood through high school education system.

As the chair of the Public Health Advisory Board, I will look forward to future appointments of these positions by the office of Governor Kotek and moving forward on public health priorities through this year with broader input and leadership from communities most impacted by public health on the board.

Thank you for your time this afternoon and I am happy to answer any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Veronica L. Irvin".

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