



March 2, 2023

To: Joint Human Services Ways & Means Committee

From: West Livaudais
Executive Director
Oregon Spinal Cord Injury Connection - www.oregonsci.org

Dear Current Co-Chairs Campos & Valderrama, and Members of the Joint Human Services Ways & Means Committee:

My name is West Livaudais, the Executive Director of Oregon Spinal Cord Injury Connection (OSCI), a disability-founded and -led nonprofit that works to ensure everyone with a spinal cord injury has the care and community they need to thrive.

Oregon Spinal Cord Injury Connection employs people with SCI as community health workers (CHW) to serve the physical disability community. They facilitate access to care and community by providing coordinated case management for people living with paralysis, building a strong disability community, and providing relevant education.

OSCI has been honored to serve as one of OHA's CBO partners, doing equity work in the area of commercial tobacco cessation and climate resilience. Specifically, the OSCI CHW Team coordinates community programs that create direct links to care and strengthens the social fabric of this community, including community meet-ups, adaptive hiking, camping and outdoor recreation, wheelchair maintenance workshops, and educational forums. This funding is critical to helping us serve the needs of one of Oregon's most vulnerable populations.

OSCI is a member of the Community Health Equity Coalition, representing more than 70 Community-Based Organizations which provide a wide-range of culturally and linguistically responsive services to more than 500,000 marginalized Oregonians across the state. Our coalition believes OHA understands the importance of Health Equity work. Across public health issues, communities of color, tribal communities, disability communities, rural communities and communities at the intersections of other identities experience greater health inequities. As integral partners in the public health systems, the CBOs in this coalition work to ensure that public health serves those who experience greater health risks, and we are trusted to provide local, culturally specific, and linguistically responsive services to eliminate health inequities.

We are grateful that the Governor has proposed to add an ADDITIONAL \$50 million to the Public Health Modernization Budget, whose current service level (CSL) is \$60.6 Million. However, this addition is not enough to meet the very real needs of marginalized communities such as the one we represent and serve. We respectfully request that OHA's request of \$286M be fully funded, including \$100M for CBOs to continue to advance health equity efforts across Oregon. This amount is far more proportionate to the real need in our most marginalized communities.

Thank you for your support!



West Livaudais
Executive Director
Oregon Spinal Cord Injury Connection

A member of Community Health Equity Coalition

