



To: Co-Chairs Senator Winsvey Campos and Representative Andrea Valderrama, and Members of the Oregon Legislative Assembly Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Services

March 23, 2023

Co-Chairs Campos and Valderrama, members of the committee, on behalf of the Washington County Public Health Advisory Council, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 5525 and for increased investments to the Public Health Division.

A modern public health system ensures critical public health protections are in place for every Oregonians, and that the public health system is prepared and has appropriate resources to address emerging health threats. A modernized public health system also ensures that, statewide, local public health and partners are making progress to eliminate health disparities.

Since its adoption in 2015, the Oregon Legislature has invested approximately \$60.6 million in public health modernization, less than half of the \$210 million gap identified in the model used by the legislature in 2016. The \$50 million in the Governor's budget would help maintain investments in the public health system implementation of the foundational capabilities and programs that have been identified over the past three biennia but falls short of the resources needed. At this level we anticipate minimal improvements in communicable disease control and prevention, and activities supporting response to public health threats. However, if the State Legislature is committed to advancing progress, then additional funding is needed.

At the \$150M level described at the January 12, 2023, Oregon Public Health Advisory Board Meeting, allocated resources would support workforce and partnerships between community, federally recognized tribes, local and state governmental public health that are working to eliminate statewide health inequities by the year 2030. The work would include chronic disease prevention and access to preventative health services that reduce burden to the healthcare system.

Oregon's public health system needs to be nimble and responsive to emerging local needs and implement community-centered initiatives. Funding modernization of the state's public health system, including local governmental public health, at an appropriate level will help to ensure that we are building and sustaining an efficient system capable of dealing with complex health problems and act as a partner in the state's efforts to eliminate costly health inequities.

Thank you for considering supporting the continuation and expansion of this important work with a \$150 million statewide investment this biennium.