



March 23, 2023

**Clackamas County Board of Commissioners
Policy Position
Relating to Oregon Health Authority Funding**

Clackamas County appreciates the legislature's attention to the local public health needs of Oregon communities, as well as its ongoing support for sustained investments in the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) and Public Health Modernization. We are making meaningful progress in modernizing Oregon's public health system, but additional and more flexible funding is needed to continue this work.

The COVID-19 pandemic and recent response to emerging risks, including MPOX and the RSV respiratory virus, underscore the essential role of a strong public health system that relies on a diverse and supported public health workforce. These unprecedented challenges also highlighted persistent gaps in Oregon's public health infrastructure that must be addressed to better prevent and respond to future health crises and advance health equity.

Oregon is experiencing significant statewide public health workforce challenges, including burnout following the pandemic and a workforce that does not fully reflect the diversity of the communities we serve. Public Health Modernization puts Oregon on a path to creating a public health workforce pipeline but requires strategic statewide investments and coordination across the entire public health system, including local, state and tribal public health agencies, community organizations, health systems and academic partners.

Additionally, an area where we can make a significant impact is by investing in recruitment and retention incentives for public health professionals. By providing incentives such as loan repayment programs, tuition reimbursement, and competitive salaries, we can encourage more people with diverse backgrounds to pursue careers in public health and ensure that we have a supported and well-trained workforce.

Clackamas County is committed to continued collaboration with state and local partners, and we urge the state legislature to increase resources that support a strong public health workforce, including additional recruitment and retention incentives available to local public health authorities. These investments and the legislature's continued support for Public Health Modernization are crucial for supporting and improving the health and well-being of all Oregonians.

Please contact Chris Lyons at clyons@clackamas.us for more information.