



January 31, 2023

Dear Chair Nosse, Vice-Chairs Goodwin & Nelson, and committee members:

I am writing on behalf of Cascade AIDS Project (CAP) to express our support for House Bill 2773, and to request an addition to the bill.

The COVID-19 pandemic has made it abundantly clear that Oregon does not have a large enough public-health workforce to respond forcefully to public-health emergencies. COVID-19 has also made clear the importance of diversity in the public-health workforce; without public-health workers who come from the communities most impacted by public-health issues, we cannot effectively reach or serve those communities. By appropriating funds to the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) for recruiting and retaining public-health workers from marginalized communities, HB 2773 will help build a more robust, representative public-health workforce that is better prepared for future threats.

HB 2773 does contain one oversight: The bill does not allow OHA to provide recruitment or retention incentives to public-health workers who identify as members of the LGBTQ+ community, even though it requires the agency to provide incentives to workers who can serve LGBTQ+ people. As an LGBTQ+ culturally specific health organization, we at CAP know that the people who can best serve the LGBTQ+ community come from our community. We all saw the need for LGBTQ+ representation in public health during last year's mpox outbreak. Therefore, we request that HB 2773 be amended to add LGBTQ+ people to the list of those eligible for recruitment or retention incentives.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Jonathan Frochtz wajg
Public Policy & Grants Manager, Cascade AIDS Project

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Rhodes Perry

Rhodes Perry Consulting, LLC

Kaydie Satein

PeaceHealth of
SW Washington

Jeffrey W. Woodcox

Tonkon Torp LLP

t > 503 223 5907
f > 503 223 6437
capnw.org