



JACKSON COUNTY

Health & Human Services

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Public Health Division

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House Behavioral Health and Health Care
HB 2773

Good afternoon, Chair Nosse and members of the Committee. For the record, my name is Jackson Baures, and I am the Public Health Division Manager at Jackson County Health & Human Services. I am here today in strong support of House Bill 2773.

As Sarah mentioned, we have been struggling with recruiting and hiring. Currently, we have 17 vacant full-time equivalent positions in Jackson County Public Health, spanning all of our programs and services. This represents a vacancy rate of nearly one-third (32.1%) of our 53 Public Health positions, including essential public safety services performed only by local public health authorities, such as Communicable Disease Investigators and Registered Environmental Health Specialists (a.k.a. Health Inspectors).

While we are working with a local marketing agency and pursuing recruitment contracts to help attract qualified candidates, House Bill 2773 would be extremely beneficial for our community. By providing incentives to increase the recruitment and retention of professionals in the local Public Health workforce, it will help us provide access to services in a culturally responsive manner, and also increase access to vital Public Health services in both rural and underserved areas of the State.

Importantly, the bill provides incentives such as sign-on and retention bonuses, child care subsidies, student loan forgiveness, tuition assistance, and scholarships for students to grow a more robust Public Health workforce and system across all communities in Oregon.

Thank you for hearing my testimony. I urge each of you to support this bill, as it would benefit us all to increase these vital services and programs across all areas of the State.