



February 5, 2024

Re: HB 4081 - Support

Chair Nosse and members of the House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care:

The Oregon Coalition of Local Health Officials (CLHO) is the association for Oregon's 33 Local Public Health entities – a number of which are responsible for administering their county's Ambulance Service Area (ASA) and the corresponding Plan (ASP). Because of this unique responsibility, we would like to highlight the following components of the bill:

1. Section 2 (5)(a) states that “The establishment of the program does not affect the contracting authority of counties and county ambulance service areas”.

This is a critical component because counties do not necessarily have a legal obligation to require certain standards of health care the way other health care delivery partners are, so it was determined to be out of scope for ASAs. Additionally, certain counties or organizations within an ASA may be working toward compliance with the standards encouraged in this legislation – which the sponsors wanted to give time and space to accomplish. Therefore, nothing in the bill mandates ASAs to comply. Over time, it is very likely that ASAs will start to be organically informed by the regional plans and standards proposed in the legislation – in a similar way as the trauma system informs them now.

2. Section 4 (1)(h) states that a member of the parent-level Advisory Board must be a “representative of county ambulance service area administrators”.

Despite the above exemption from hard compliance, the ASAs will still play a critical role in emergency medicine in the state, and it is important to ensure they are a part of the decision making process that could impact them down the road, and vice versa as they make decisions that could impact EMS throughout the area/region.

Lastly, the subcommittees, other task forces, and the regional boards are not exhaustive in membership prescriptions, so representatives of county ASAs or local health officials or any others could continue to be included at all different levels of the program as this framework is carried out.

The EMS System in Oregon is in dire need of additional infrastructure and workforce. As such, CLHO is proud to support this critical step forward and thanks the chief sponsor and her staff for all the work they've put into this bill and for being so inclusive during the workgroup process.

