

February 19, 2025

TO: Co-Chairs Campos and Valderrama and members of the Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Services

FROM: Association of Oregon Counties Legislative Affairs Manager, Jessica Pratt

RE: Support HB 5025 with at least \$25M for public health modernization

Dear Co-Chairs Campos and Valderrama and members of the committee,

On behalf of the Association of Oregon Counties, representing Oregon's county governments, I am writing to urge your support for local public health program funding needs brought to you by Coalition of Local Health Officials, our local public health program directors, calling out especially today the need for at least \$25 million for the next phase of public health modernization targeted to communicable disease prevention.

County boards of commissioners are the Local Public Health Authority, with the duty to administer and enforce Oregon's public health laws, adopt a local public health plan, provide oversight and accountability of services, and appoint a qualified local public health administrator.

Counties partner with the Oregon Public Health Division to provide services that help our communities thrive, like communicable disease prevention and response; needle exchange; sexual health education; tobacco cessation to reduce oral cancer and other disease, health promotion like maternal and child home health visits and substance use prevention; and environmental health services like monitoring water quality, food safety, and disaster preparedness.

These services improve the quality of life in our communities and the wellbeing of our constituents.

With more resources, Oregon's public health efforts can move upstream to prevent disease spread and avoid the cascading health and economic costs of preventable infections. Local public health programs promote and provide vaccines against childhood diseases like measles and polio that keep our children and babies safe - we have the highest rate of whooping cough today than we've seen since 1950. Local public health conducts restaurant inspections and identifies food-borne illness, tracing it back to its source and quickly communicating about the danger to

the public in a language folks understand. Local public health education to our school age children and community members on the power of washing hands, covering your cough with an elbow, staying home when sick, is foundational to healthy communities, as is contact tracing and support to those who have been exposed to a communicable disease to reduce transmission.

This investment in communicable disease prevention will equip our local public health programs to meet their statutory obligations and help keep our communities healthy and safe.

The Association of Oregon Counties asks for your support for at least \$25 million for communicable disease prevention and response through the public health modernization framework and we thank you for partnering with counties to promote life-long health for all Oregonians.

Jessica Pratt  
Legislative Affairs Manager  
Association of Oregon Counties