

TITLE: Did the Legislature Double or Continue Chronic Underfunding of Oregon's Public Health System in 2019? What's Next for Public Health Modernization Advocacy?

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STUDENT SUBMISSION: No

TOPIC/TARGET AUDIENCE: Public health and health care practitioners, researchers, and students in the state and local public health departments and in other settings who care about and address the health and wellbeing of Oregon communities especially for vulnerable people; Commu

ABSTRACT: The public health system addresses the 90% of actual causes contributing to health that healthcare does not. Chronically underfunded, Oregon was ranked 47th among states for per capita public health funding by its legislature. Accelerating cuts in federal funding further threaten public health. Local public health authorities (LPHAs) lack core funding for interventions to prevent chronic and other illnesses in their communities. One LPHA has closed. Others face fiscal instability. After 2013 legislation, the OHA Public Health Division, with multidisciplinary stakeholders, honed and vetted the Public Health Modernization (PHM) initiative. PHM prioritizes state and 34 LPHAs to implement core functions and empowers LPHAs to address priorities unique to their communities. In 2017, of the ~\$37 million requested, the legislature allocated \$5 million. The few communities awarded these funds have since reported positive impacts. As the 2019 session closes, despite public health's and allied partners' advocacy, only \$10 million of the \$47.7 million Governor's request is being proposed. It's not clear how effective this advocacy has been. Public health lacks a cohesive advocacy ground game. We invite advocates, practitioners and concerned Oregonians to examine our efforts and brainstorm strategies and partnership-building needed to strengthen our 2020 advocacy with legislators.

OBJECTIVE(S): Understand the public health impact of lessons learned from the Oregon 2019 legislative session. Learn at least two methods to advocate for public health policy. Recognize importance of advocating for adequate funding that supports a strong, fully functional public health system in Oregon. Understand about the limitations and opportunities public health employees face in engaging with the legislature and learn how, as citizens, public health professionals in government can still engage and be heard. Briefly articulate two elevator speeches about: What public health problem(s) are unaddressed or What evidence-based public health intervention(s) is/are needed by your community or communities & What actions to fund these gaps you want your Oregon legislator to do from now into the next Legislative session to assure adequate funding to address these needs are allocated. Commit to at least 3 action steps that Oregon public health professionals and community members, including yourself, will take from now through the next legislative session to advocate for full funding from

the state for Oregon's public health system. Explore and strategize how partner organizations of and community members served by local public health authorities can be better advocates for public health here in Oregon.

PANEL MODERATOR: James A. Gaudino, Jr. MD, MPH, MS, FACPM

PANEL ABSTRACT 1: The Oregon Public Health Association (OPHA) is a statewide, membership-based professional association. Our mission is to provide learning opportunities for public health professionals and the broader community and to advocate for policies that protect and promote the health of all Oregonians. Advocates for a broad range of issues impacting health recognize the value of securing an OPHA endorsement. OPHA offers advocacy training in the lead up to our annual Public Health Advocacy Day when members converge in Salem to meet with legislators and advocate for policies ranging from vaccine policy, climate change, transportation, social determinants of health and public health modernization. Yet, we and our partners lack the ability to mobilize coordinated, community-based advocacy efforts to push for fully funding preventive services needed by all Oregon communities. Some Oregon legislators are strong public health allies while others need exposure to public health principles and education about how public health investments deliver a high return on investment in the form of lower healthcare costs, reduced disease or injuries, and improved health outcomes. We invite attendees to help outline Oregon public health's next advocacy steps and learn how to bring a public health voice to Salem through OPHA advocacy opportunities.

PRESENTER 1: Jessica Nischiik-Long MPH*

PANEL ABSTRACT 2: Oregon legislative policies and funding prioritize healthcare access and system reform but ignore widening cracks in the public health system, already chronically underfunded and missing community-level prevention opportunities. State public health funding now ranks near the bottom in the US. As a Prevention Specialist Physician concerned about ongoing health inequities in Oregon and about public health lacking capacity and resources to respond, I have invested more and more time personally in advocating with state legislators for the full funding of > \$47.7 million for Public Health Modernization, another system reform. In my face-to-face meetings, legislators have told me that, in general, they rarely hear from public health professionals. Nor do they hear about the on-the-ground impacts and needs for public health in communities they represent. During this session, I will share lessons learned and invite dialogue about actionable next steps. For example, we will talk through strategies to redirect conversations when legislators interject dialogue-killing or defensive comments and how to prepare for short meetings that require well-crafted messages and materials with specific asks to follow-up on. Advocacy is a learned skill that takes persistence, perspective and agency. Come share your expertise and experience.

PRESENTER 2: James A. Gaudino, Jr. MD, MPH, MS, FACPM

PANEL ABSTRACT 3: A 2010 national survey found that constituents are more influential on legislator decisions than lobbyists or news editors. As experts in their field, frontline public health workers are well positioned to educate legislators and advocate for public health funding, yet few engage with their legislators or community members about funding needs. Supporting

local public health authorities (LPHAs) in Oregon through partnerships, the Coalition of Local Health Officials (CLHO) engages directly with legislators and facilitates advocacy by LPHAs and their partners for priority public health legislation, such as the multi-year push for full funding of local communities through the Public Health Modernization (PHM) initiative. Hear local perspectives and stories on opportunities and challenges when engaging with the legislators as public employees from CLHO leadership and LPHA member. Learn what you need to know in order to more fully engage in advocacy as citizens who are public employees and how, as non-public employees, you can partner to make the case to your legislators to support funding for needed prevention services for the people in your and the other 33+ local communities in Oregon.

PRESENTER 3: Caitlin Hill MPH*, Robert Dannenhoffer MD*, Morgan D. Cowling MPA*
