



POLK COUNTY

PUBLIC HEALTH

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Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Services
Testimony on SB 5526
April 2nd, 2015

Chair Bates, Chair Nathanson, and members of the Committee:

My name is Katrina Rothenberger and I am the Public Health Administrator at the Polk County Public Health Department. I am here today in support of additional investments in public health to ensure capacity in our state to meet the rising tide of reportable disease, the restoration of funding so that all women in Oregon have access to reproductive health services; and that we continue to prevent the major drivers of death and disease in Oregon.

Today, I would like to primarily share with you the work we are doing in Polk County to address the need for comprehensive reproductive health care in a rural community. Polk County Public Health is an important access point for women seeking reproductive health services. The limited provider panel in my county exacerbates many existing barriers to health care like transportation and access to affordable childcare. Preliminary results from Polk County's partner survey found that two of the top five factors to most adversely affect our community include poverty and access to healthcare.

Through our Title X and our Contraceptive Care (CCare) programs, we're able to provide pregnancy testing, pelvic exams, STD screening and treatment, counseling on nutrition, tobacco use, and relationship safety. Last year alone, Polk County Public Health averted 97 unintended pregnancies. Most of those unintended pregnancies would become recipients under the Oregon Health Plan as unintended pregnancies occur most frequently in women in poverty between the ages of 18 and 24. In 2013, the average cost of an OHP delivery and the first year of infant health care was \$17,028. Preventing unintended pregnancies in Polk County saved taxpayers over \$825,858. The savings generated by Local Public Health Departments should, in part, be reinvested into Local Public Health. My commissioners believe in the work of the Polk County Family Planning clinic and have dedicated over \$50,000 in general fund to ensure the continuation of reproductive health services for our community.

In addition to our local investment, continued state investment in the Oregon CCare program will help ensure access to vital reproductive health services remain in Polk County by helping us continue our campaign for *The Place for Teen Health*. This educational and marketing campaign aims to promote access to effective contraceptive use in teens and young adults. We also provide a 5-day per week walk-in family planning clinic for anyone to receive reproductive health services and contraception. Reinvesting the savings generated from Local Public Health Departments to maintain CCare and access to reproductive health will positively contribute to the economic growth and sustainability of our community.

I would like to thank the Committee for your leadership in important public health initiatives, urge you to continue this leadership and support the funding of this important public health work.

Sincerely,

Katrina Rothenberger
Public Health Administrator
Polk County Health Department