



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

To: Co-Chairs Senator Bates and Representative Nathanson, and members of the Committee:

My name is Carrie Brogoitti and I am the public health administrator at the Center for Human Development in Union County. Our organization serves as the local public health authority and provides public health services on behalf of the County. I am writing in support of additional investments in public health to ensure that all women in Oregon have access to reproductive health services; that there is capacity in our state to meet the rising tide of reportable disease; and to ensure that we continue to prevent the major drivers of death and disease in Oregon.

I would like to share with the Subcommittee the work we are doing in Union County to improve health outcomes for our constituents.

The Center for Human Development plays a vital role in making sure Union County residents are able to obtain the **services they need to plan the timing and spacing of their pregnancies, prevent reproductive cancers, and prevent and stop the spread of sexually transmitted diseases**. Local health departments like ours are an essential component in assuring health care access, particularly in rural communities. Because our community is small and there are a limited number of health care providers, there is a risk that clients will forego care if they are uncomfortable seeking "sensitive" services at their usual provider, or if they know someone that works at a provider's office. This is particularly true for younger clients, and when they do not obtain needed services their risk for teen pregnancy and serious health issues resulting from untreated sexually transmitted infections increases. **Our clients need health departments as an option for these services and funding is needed to make these services available.**

Communicable disease surveillance and investigation is a foundational public health capability, and the Center for Human Development regularly works with local partners to **prevent and respond to communicable disease outbreaks**. In addition to our daily work of responding to communicable disease reports and assuring proper investigation and treatment, we are working with partners like the county emergency manager and our local hospital to plan and practice how we respond to outbreaks like Measles, Ebola, and Whooping Cough that have occurred in Oregon and beyond over the past few years. We also work with schools to help them meet school exemption requirements related to vaccines. By helping make sure children attending school are vaccinated we are also reducing the spread of disease and increasing community immunity. We are working hard to protect our citizens by keeping these diseases out of our community with quick investigations and minimizing the spread of disease if a case is reported. Our community relies solely on State Support for Public Health to survey and investigate communicable diseases. The only way we are able to maintain adequate staffing is to have our communicable disease nurse work in multiple program areas. This structure is barely adequate for the day-to-day functions of the communicable disease program, but it poses significant challenges when we have an outbreak of any kind, as it is difficult

for the Communicable Disease nurse to drop their other duties for days and weeks at a time.  
**Additional investment in communicable disease is needed to protect the public's safety.**

As a leader in cost-saving preventative work for our community, the Center for Human Development is continually engaging in work with partners to improve the lifelong well being of our population. The Center for Human Development is an active member of the Safe Communities Coalition which is **working to prevent underage alcohol, tobacco and drug use in Union County, as well as high risk drinking in young adults.** Smokeless tobacco use among youth in our community is much higher than the rest of the state, so the Coalition is currently working to support policy changes that create environments that make it easier for youth to make healthy choices related to alcohol and tobacco use. **Additional investment in prevention activities is needed to help youth make choices that improve lifelong health.**

The Center for Human Development is working to **reduce the burden of chronic disease through a number of Union County-based prevention projects.** We are active participants in the U.C. Fit Kids Coalition, which is working to address childhood obesity and lifelong chronic disease in Union County. The Coalition works closely with schools and community organizations to create changes in schools and the community that increase children's access to healthy food and physical activity. We are also working with the Union County Advisory Committee for the Eastern Oregon Coordinated Care Organization on a project aimed at reducing low birth weight. By working to intervene as early as possible, before women get pregnant, we will reduce lifelong health issues, including chronic disease, for Union County residents and reduce health care costs for pregnancy and childbirth. **Additional funding to support these community-based prevention activities would allow us to do even more to prevent the impact of chronic disease in Union County.**

Thank you for allowing me to share the work we do at the Union County Center for Human Development, and I urge you to support the funding of this important public health work.

Thank you,

Carrie Brogoitti, MPH  
Public Health Administrator